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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF THE

ABATE METASTASIO.

IN WHICH ARE INCORPORATED,

TRANSLATIONS

OF HIS

PRINCIPAL LETTERS.

2171
ac

By CHARLES BURNEY, Mus. D. F. R. S.

Omniaque ejus non solum facta, sed etiam dicta meminisset.

Cic. Somn. Scip.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF THE ABATE

PIETRO METASTASIO.

SECTION I.

METASTASIO having finiſhed his opera of *Il Re Paſtore* in April 1751, writes to his friend Sig. Argenvilliers at Rome, with exultation. "I have at length eſcaped from the hands of thoſe babblers the Muſes. I have teaſed and tormented them ſo much, that they have finiſhed their web much ſooner than they would have done, if they had been left to their own direction. I am now at the ſervice of my dear friends, particularly Sig. d'Argenvilliers, to whoſe pious

prayers, I believe I owe, in a great meaſure, my happy return from Parnaſſus.

LETTER I.

TOSIG. D'ARGENVILLIERS.

STILL fatigued and covered with duſt and ſweat, after my unexpected and haſty voyage, I inſtantly flew to your letters, a reſtoratives. I have greedily re-peruſed them, and frequently bluſhed at the ungrateful return for your obliging and affectionate zeal, which I have made by a ſilence of ſo many weeks. But you know that I am innocent of this fault, and merit your pity more than your diſpleaſure. I can aſſure you, with great truth, that I have ſuch pleaſure in my literary intercourſe with you, that if I were deprived of it by my own fault, my crime would be my puniſhment.

Now, that you may not think, like the reſt of the world, that poets are bad fathers o families, it will be neceſſary for me to give you ſome account of my œconomical cares.

(Here he gives a minute detail of his money concerns, and balances accounts to the date of his letter. After which he adds)

Thus

Thus all is ſettled, except the ſum of my obligations, which far exceeds my ſmall capital, and means of repaying the aſſiduous and affectionate care which you conſtantly take of my affairs. And I ſhould already have overdrawn my credit, if a good heart, like yours, did not regard as ready money, the gratitude, however ineffectual, of a poor debtor.

My new opera is already in the hands of my moſt auguſt Patroneſs, to whom both myſelf and all my productions properly belong. This drama is to be performed in muſic, by gentlemen and ladies, but not till the return of the court from Hungary. In the mean time, it would be an enormous indecorum, if I were to publiſh it. So that there are both phyſical and moral cauſes againſt its appearing in Giannini's Edition next June. However, I ſo much reſpect his requeſt, backed by your wiſh, that when I can ſafely and honourably comply with it, I ſhall be happy in obliging him.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

You have found the way to make me your debtor, even in the number of letters. I have many of yours in hand which have arrived ſince my laſt, and which I muſt anſwer by this one, contrary to the propenſity I have to be prolix with you. My *Re Paſtore* appeared on the ſtage laſt Wedneſday, and was repeated on Saturday, by the unanimous ſuffrage of the whole audience; this very much ſurpaſſed my expectations, and added, if poſſible, to my experience. In truth, the lady performers charmed every one, both by their figure and ſinging, as well as by their manner of acting, and entering into their ſeveral characters. Our auguſt ſovereigns were extremely delighted with them, and never ceaſe praiſing them. All the portion of this incenſe which comes to my ſhare, is inſufficient to defend me from a return of the defluxion which I caught in Moravia, and which I had not quite ſubdued when I was recalled. The

frequent

frequent attendance at court, two or three miles from the city; the length of time I was obliged to remain in the empty and extreme cold theatre, during the rehearſal; the impertinence of the ſeaſon, and of my ridiculous machine, have reduced me to ſo much worſe a ſtate than I was in before, that if I was not afraid of bringing all the ſaints on my back, I ſhould certainly be tempted to leave the maſs of the day among unpaid debts (*a*). Pity me therefore; or rather, be thankful to my catarrh, if I do not peſter you as much as I wiſh.—Adieu, my incomparable friend. If I could write more, I ſhould ſay a thouſand affectionate things. I give you full permiſſion to figure to yourſelf, the moſt expreſſive that you can think of; and am certain, that they will not equal the affection, gratitude, or eſteem, with which I am, &c.

Vienna, November 1, 1751.

In another letter to this correſpondent, dated December 6th 1751, he ſays, "I have got *Il Re Paſtore* off my hands, but I ſhall not long

(*a*) Alluding to the feſtival of *All Saints*, or the firſt of November, the day on which he was writing.

be ſuffered to remain idle. My Imperial Miſtreſs, after the repeated clemency with which ſhe has approved my labours, threatens me with a new command; and I already feel it vibrate in my ears; ſo that my occupations are like the fruits in the garden of Armida.

E mentre ſpunta l'un, l'altro matura (b).

This new production is the ſubject of a letter to his Piemonteſe friend, Sig. Filipponi, who had complained of his neglect during the time he was writing it.

LETTER III.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

You muſt not aſcribe to the poor Muſes my reluctance to writing letters. I have not, like many others, the happy power of ſpeaking eloquently upon nothing; ſo that when matter is wanting, I am ſilent. Who can have patience to write every poſt about rain, or fine weather? or in the manner of Pindar, ſpeak of water, gold, and the beautiful cows of Gerone, as *à propos* to the

(*b*) While one matures, the other buds and blows.

Olympic

Olympic games? Some of my Laconiſm, however, may proceed from native lazineſs, but, at preſent, the time for new vices or new virtues is paſt; ſo that ſuch as I am, my friends muſt bear with me.

I approve of the diſtribution of my prints; and if you want any more, you ſhall have them upon the ſlighteſt hint you can give me.

This new edition of my works at Turin, may be ſuperior to others, if not printed in the uſual ſmall characters, merely for a paltry ſaving of paper. If you could ſend me a ſpecimen in a letter, I would frankly give you my ſentiments on the ſubject.

The title of my new opera is, *Il Re Paſtore*. The chief incident is the reſtitution of the kingdom of Sidon to the lawful heir; a prince with ſuch an hypochondriac name, that he would have diſgraced the title page of my piece: who would have been able to bear an opera intitled *l'Abdolonimo?* I have contrived to name him as ſeldom as poſſible, as among all my faults, my labours had hitherto avoided this defect.

It will be repreſented in muſic by ladies and gentlemen, but not before December; till when, it cannot be publiſhed without a

crime. I offer my uſual incenſe to the amiable prieſteſs, and am conſtantly yours.

Vienna, June 10, 1751.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

I SHALL now anſwer your charming letter from the ſpacious regions of imagination; in order to do which, I waited two or three weeks in the vain expectation of receiving ſpecimens of this new edition of my works, which you had promiſed me; but as yet, none are arrived. I have ſeen the two firſt volumes of that printed at Piacenza, which in my opinion, is contemptible; hence it will certainly do no injury to yours.

In an edition in 12mo. by Bettinelli, I have ſeen a cantata, and a canzonet, given undeſervedly to me; I incloſe a memorandum of it, that the Tureneſe editor may not enrich me, againſt my will, with the ſpoils of another.

When my *Re Paſtore* has done its duty at this court, I ſhall take care to ſend it to do homage to you; but you muſt tell me how.

Here

Here are ſix more little Metaſtaſios, which I confide to your direction, leſt they ſhould take evil courſes.

My complaints are enemies to the oriental ſtyle, ſo adieu. Remember my reſpects to the Count and Counteſs della Rocca; reverence the prieſteſs; receive the ſalutations of all the *Canale* family. Love me, and believe me, &c.

Vienna, Auguſt 19, 1751.

We are now arrived at the correſpondence of our great lyric bard, in 1752; during which his letters to his friend Sig. d'Argenvilliers, are the moſt numerous. But thoſe being chiefly on buſineſs, as before obſerved, we ſhall not tranſlate them entire, but extract ſuch paſſages only, as bear our author's peculiar ſtamp of wit, friendſhip, or urbanity.

In a ſhort letter, dated January 3d, 1752, we have the following concluſion: "It is ſo late, that I have ſcarce time to acknowledge the receipt of your letter; think then of the impoſſibility of anſwering all your good wiſhes, and thoſe affectionate expreſſions of partiality, with which you have loaded me. Anſwer them yourſelf, who know how much I owe you; and who being in poſſeſſion

poſſeſſion of my heart, can examine its moſt ſecret receſſes."

"The Muſes (ſays he, in the ſubſequent letter to Sig. d'Argenvilliers) are become very ſhy and backward to me; requiring to be courted much more than I wiſh. I have been very indifferent about theſe ladies favours for ſome time; but, at preſent, now they defraud me of the pleaſure of diſcourſing with you, they are become my averſion. But I beg of you not to ſpeak of it; for if the D—l ſhould contrive to let them know my ſentiments, they would treat me worſe than ever."

In another letter he ſays: "Not being able to ſatisfy my impatience to embrace and converſe with you in perſon, I ſend you my picture, with a charge to preſerve in you that good diſpoſition towards friendſhip and partiality, which you have always manifeſted for me. The painter has a little injured my beauty, by making my face two palms long, and plumping me up without mercy. They ſay, however, that it is like."

"Receive the viſit kindly; love the original, and believe me on all occaſions, yours."

Having this year taken fright at a few days of bad weather, ſoon after his arrival

in Moravia, and ſuddenly returned to Vienna, he ſays: "Here I am again in the city, with remorſe for the injuſtice which my cowardice has done to the conſtancy of ſmiling autumn, who now more than fulfils every hope, by being uncommonly ſerene. It is in vain to repine now; but another year, I ſhall not retreat with ſuch precipitation, in order to impriſon myſelf within the walls of a city."

About this time, his friend d'Argenvilliers having recommended to the kind offices of Metaſtaſio, a young Roman of the name of *Pezzi*, we ſhall extract from the poet's letters, ſuch paſſages as concern this recommendation.

"I have at length found Sig. *Pezzi*. I have been with him, and he with me, three times. He is a fine young man, of noble and excellent manners, and who promiſes to do honour to the friend who recommended him. He has no thoughts of the army; but ſpeaks of purſuing a different road, and I ſhall do every thing in my power to ſecond his views. I hope he has no doubt of my zeal, as there is nothing which I would not do, or which I ought not to do, on your account. All will depend on my power correſponding

with

with my wiſhes. At preſent, I ſhall endeavour to diſcover to him the perils of the country in which he now dwells, and to inform myſelf of his habits." Four or five months after, he ſays:

"Sig. *Pezzi* manifeſted a laudable diſlike to being idle, and very little deſire for being a ſoldier. In order therefore to initiate him in politics, according to his wiſh, I contrived that he ſhould be advantageouſly known to our Count Ullfelt, and other principal perſons in adminiſtration, who ſpoke of him to my auguſt Patroneſs; and it was ſettled, that when an opportunity offered, he ſhould be ſent with ſome ambaſſador, or envoy, to one of the foreign courts of Europe, where, by diligence and practice, he might render himſelf qualified for ſome ſtation in the *Corps diplomatique*.

"While things were in this ſituation, he came unexpectedly to take leave of me, previous to his departure for Berlin, whither he ſaid he was obliged to go, for ſome time, on family affairs. I furniſhed him with a letter, which I wrote to a friend of mine, of ſome credit in that court; but from that time to this, I have been wholly in the dark, concerning the effects of my letter, his adventures, or

his exiſtence. When he returns, as he promiſed to do, I ſhall reſume my duty in doing every thing in my power for your ſake, to facilitate the road which he means to purſue. If he ſhould have occaſion for money, I will advance him whatever ſum you pleaſe, on the ſlighteſt notice. But I cannot, with equal readineſs, promiſe to conduct him by a ſure road to preferment. Accuſtomed myſelf to follow the beaten track, I am wholly ignorant of all private and by roads; and my inexperience would do him more harm than good. But whenever he returns from Pruſſia, he will find pilots here for ſome voyage or other. Do not, my dear friend, fancy me a Don Quixote, For the management of buſineſſes of this nature, I want inclination as well as practice."

Soon after, he ſays to his friend: "I regard diſſimulation among intimate friends, as a raſcally vice. Therefore, you will, I hope, forgive my ſincerity. I by no means underſtand the conduct of our Sig. *Pezzi.* He is a young man of a fine aſpect, of poliſhed manners, and, apparently, poſſeſſed of a great ſhare of prudence and diſcernment. Yet I have been hitherto utterly unable to penetrate his thoughts; though he conſtant-

ly

ly viſits me once a month. Every time I ſee him, he ſeems a different man; and always approaching me with different views from thoſe in which, at his own requeſt, I had been trying to ſerve him before. It is difficult to adviſe a man who is always changing his purſuits, and who gives no notice of it, unleſs hard preſſed. I beg that you will not mention this to his brother. But it was neceſſary for you to know it, that in caſe he ſhould return empty handed, you may not be ignorant that the perſon you have recommended, has conſpired with the extreme narrowneſs of my powers of ſerving him, to delude the great and ſerious deſire which I have to ſerve him for your ſake."

In another letter dated April 1753, he ſays: "Sig. *Pezzi* having wiſhed to accompany ſome Imperial miniſter to a foreign court, in order to acquire abilities ſufficient to entitle him to an employment in the *Corps diplomatique*; I have been ſo fortunate as to prevail on *Count Colloredo*, our Envoy to the Engliſh court, to take him into his ſervice, with a ſmall ſalary, and the conſent and approbation of their Imperial majeſties. I hope the voyage will turn out profitable: particularly, as he tells me, that his

his family has ſome concerns in that country, and that his preſence will not be uſeleſs there."

Though nothing more occurs in our poet's letters to Sig. d'Argenvilliers concerning his *protegé*, Sig. *Pezzi*, we ſhall perhaps return to this correſpondence again for ſome intereſting paſſages on other ſubjects. At preſent, we ſhall reſume his intercourſe with Farinelli, to whom the following letter was written in February, 1752.

LETTER V.

TO THE CAVALIER FARINELLI.

In ſpite of the obſtinate and inſufferable impertinence of my nervous complaints, and the employment allotted to me by my Imperial Patroneſs, I cannot poſtpone acknowledging the receipt of my dear Gemello's moſt welcome letter of the 28th of January. For my moſt heinous ſins, the dramatic ladies in *Il Re Paſtore*, and the muſic, have ſo much pleaſed her Majeſty the Empreſs, that ſhe has commanded me to write another drama to be performed next May, made of the ſame metal. In the preſent ſtate of my

poor

poor head, from the conſtant tenſion of my nerves, it is a terrible taſk to be obliged to converſe with theſe harlots the Muſes; but my labours are rendered infinitely more intolerable, by the manner in which I am manacled. Greek and Roman ſubjects are excluded from my juridiction, becauſe theſe nymphs are not to exhibit their chaſte limbs; ſo that I muſt have recourſe to Oriental hiſtory, in order not to ſhew the nakedneſs of the land, that the robes and ornaments of thoſe nations may entirely envelope the actreſſes who are to repreſent the characters of men. The contraſt of vice and virtue is impracticable in theſe dramas, becauſe no one of the troop will act an odious part. Nor can I avail myſelf of more than five perſonages, for the moſt convincing reaſon aſſigned by the governor of a caſtle; who would not crowd the preſence of his ſuperiors. The time of repreſentation, the changes of ſcene, the airs, and almoſt the number of verſes are limited: now pray tell me, if all theſe embarraſſments would not make a patient man mad? Then imagine to yourſelf their effects on me, the high prieſt of all the complaints incident to this miſerable valley of tears. I have no other comfort

for

for my ſupport, than the conſtant clemency of my moſt benign Sovereign, confirmed every day by new teſtimonies. The laſt, on account of the repreſentation of *Il Re Paſtore*, was that of a magnificent gold candleſtick, with an extinguiſher and ſnuffers of the ſame metal, of a conſiderable weight, and of excellent workmanſhip; and accompanied with an obliging command *to take care of my ſight*. Now I beg you will learn to reſpect my little *peepers*, which are ſo greatly patronized.

I am glad to find that Monſig. *Torres*, anſwers my deſcription. Embrace him, I beg you, in my name. I love him, becauſe he adored you: now what will he do, after having enjoyed your company in a more ample manner?

With reſpect to my Neapolitan intereſts, you think exactly as I do. Neither the decorum of your court, my own pride, nor the miſerable and contemptible hopes which are given us, can longer deceive any one poſſeſſed of the leaſt reflection. It is difficult to find a ſimilar example of inhumanity, injuſtice, and avidity, for the poſſeſſions of others. Oh, my dear *Gemello*, how few *Gemelli* are there in the world! I thank

you for the idea of trying other ſtrings; and truſt to the experience of the archconſul of harmony. The Colomba Mattei will ſerve you well. I who am never ſatisfied, believe that if this performer, who has a pleaſing figure, and good voice, was a little taller, and had a little more power of voice, ſhe would be an admirable firſt woman. But during the preſent ſcarcity, we muſt not be ſo difficult.

Oh, what fine things has Count *Verner* ſaid of you, on his return from Spain! I feed on theſe relations, and wiſh them to be eternal. Love me, my dear Twin, and believe that I ceaſe writing, for want of head, and want of time: but I never ſhall ceaſe, as long as I live, from being yours.

Vienna, February 18th, 1752.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

YOUR laſt moſt dear letter of the 16th of June, has been received four days, and yet I am not recovered from the ſurpriſe and confuſion in which the unexpected royal favour

favour of your truly admirable Sovereign has plunged me. Good God! can clemency, generoſity, and greatneſs of ſoul, go farther? To think, ſpeak, and act in this manner, are qualities aſſigned by Providence ſolely to her to employ. Her ſupreme interpoſition in ſupport of reaſon, and juſtice, when oppreſſed, are efforts worthy of Monarchs; to expend their treaſures in repairing loſſes which they themſelves have not occaſioned, is the attribute of royalty; but to deſcend to minute enquiries, and reflections on the hardſhips of a poor mortal like me, ſurrounded as ſhe is, by the cares which belong to ſo elevated a ſtation, is a circumſtance which ſurpaſſes humanity, and not only merits gratitude and reverence, but adoration. The few royal words which you have communicated, form the grand characterestic of this Sovereign. She has done me the juſtice to believe me to be a man who thinks more of his honour than profit, and has deſigned to ſet limits to the torrent of her beneficence, in order to ſkreen me, from envy and malignity. Angels in heaven, I believe, think in this manner. I am more ſenſible of the honour which this does my character, than if I had been ap-

pointed vice-roy of Mexico, or preſented with a Cardinal's hat. Theſe may ſeem poetical hyperboles; but you know me ſufficiently to be certain, that they are poſitive truths; and now your heroic friendſhip has procured me theſe great honours and advantages, you muſt complete the work, and communicate my humble, grateful, and reverential acknowledgments. Throw me at the foot of the throne; aſſert, that if the ſhower of royal munificence is fallen on an ordinary ſoil, it has at leaſt been beſtowed on one that is not ungrateful. Say all that I ought to ſay, but which I find unſpeakable, even with the aſſiſtance of all the Muſes. Implore the continuance of ſuch ſublime patronage; and I, in the mean time, inſtead of returning thanks, will offer up my ſupplications to Heaven, that a ſoul ſo great and elevated, may be long ſuffered to continue among mortals, for the ornament of all thrones, the felicity of the whole earth, and for an example to all Monarchs *(c)*. I have

(c) To what theſe effuſions allude, does not clearly appear, in the courſe of this, or any ſubſequent letter; but they well merit preſerving, as models of heroic and poetical gratitude, flowing from the warm heart of a man of genius,

I have ſeen, for a ſhort time, Count Eſtherhaſi, after his return from Madrid, and have found him full of you. He regards you as a hero, and has deſired me to tell you ſo; which will oblige me likewiſe to love you more than ever. At this laſt aſſertion, I cannot help laughing; but I own, that to hear you thus praiſed, affords me the ſame pleaſure, as if it was myſelf: ſo much does our old, true, and reciprocal friendſhip, ſeem to have united us together, and conſolidated our intereſts. God preſerve you, our dear Gemello, and inſpire others to think as you do.

Laſt Sunday my Opera of L'Eroe Cinese, was repreſented for the laſt time, with incredible applauſe of the ladies and gentlemen performers. I am worn out. The whole weight of the buſineſs fell on my ſhoulders. I came home with a violent cough, which ſtill continues; but as ſoon as it abates, I ſhall aſk permiſſion of my moſt auguſt patroneſs, to fly into the country, to refit. If I ſhould there obtain a moment's peace, you will be my only thought. And who can poſſibly deſerve it ſo much as

genius, ſerved and flattered by a ſovereign Princeſs, ſenſible of his ſuperior talents.

my dear Gemello? I am obliged to you for the deſcription of the magnificent royal feſtival, which you invented and directed, and am impatient to ſee it more amply deſcribed in the Gazette. In the mean time, I do its office every where, to the admiration of all hearers.

I am not certain whether it was laſt April or May, that I ſent a letter to my agent at Naples, informing him of circumſtances for a miniſter who required them. I am ſorry the requiſition was complied with; but it ſhall be the laſt time.

I ought to ſpeak of the road which you have attempted to Rome; but who can ſpeak to you of every thing? Oh what a dear Gemello you are! But at leaſt, take my part with the Marquis *Enſenada*, and recommend me to his protection. Adieu. The Counteſs of Althan ſalutes you, and is as much ſurpriſed as myſelf, at the favours I receive. I really can write no more. Continue to love me, and believe me yours, as long as life remains.

Vienna, July 8th, 1752.

LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

I SET out this moment for Moravia, in order to join the moſt worthy Counteſs of Althan, and the General her ſon, who have been there ſome days. I go flattered with hopes of being relieved, if not liberated, from the cruel torments I ſuffer, amidſt the pertinacious perſecutions of my hypochondriac complaints, violently increaſed by the hurry in which I have lately been engaged. It is impoſſible for me to explain to you, my dear Gemello, the miſerable ſtate in which I have been for theſe ſeven years paſt. The worſt of it is, that I ſee no likelihood of accuſtoming myſelf to theſe ſufferings, as frequently happens to others. And I perceive, that you are not better treated by your ſtomach, than I am by my nerves. Oh poor humanity! But good God! Why are not theſe delights beſtowed on a number of blockheads and raſcals, who enjoy perfect health? But the great Regulator of all things

has reaſons which we are not allowed to penetrate. We have therefore nothing to hope, but from patience, and reſignation.

You think, perhaps, that I am now quite recovered from the ſurpriſe and confuſion into which I was thrown by your moſt beneficent and magnanimous ſovereign? But you are miſtaken. I never ſhall recover as long as I live. Theſe traits of royalty have been ſo little in faſhion for ſome ages, that it is impoſſible not to admire and venerate them. I entreat you again, my dear friend, to bear teſtimony, whenever you have an opportunity, of my moſt humble, grateful, and ſubmiſſive ſentiments.

Adieu, dear Gemello. I have ſpoken to count Eſterhaſi: he calls you by no other name than the Hero. The affection which you contrive to acquire from all ranks in a ſituation ſo enviable, encreaſes my tenderneſs for you ſo much, that I know not how I ſhould contain myſelf if I were near you. Pray to God for my poor head, if you would have it think of you. Love me, and remain thus amiable to the whole earth.

Vienna, Auguſt 5, 1752.

LETTER XIII.

TO THE SAME.

HERE I am, juſt returned from Moravia, after a long and tumultuous excurſion, which, on account of my health, I have been allowed by the maternal clemency of my auguſt miſtreſs, to extend to full ten weeks. The firſt perſon to whom I eagerly run after my arrival, is my deareſt Gemello, whom I tenderly embrace in that kind of way which ſo enormous a diſtance will allow. Among the moſt ſenſible pleaſures which I found in this city at my return, was the meeting with our dear Count Eſterhaſi, who almoſt before he ſaluted me, which he always does, began to ſpeak of you: ſtill calling you nothing but the *Hero*. He ſays that you are the object of all good people's affection; that your heart correſponds with your fortune; and has recounted a great number of your admirable, generous, and gracious actions. Among others, the manner in which you treated an Indian candidate, who offered you

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an immenſe ſum if you would procure him a government; and he takes ſuch delight in theſe narrations, and the ſound of your praiſe is ſo ſeducing to me, that if count Eſterhaſi was not obliged to go elſewhere, I believe he would be ſtill talking of you, and I ſhould remain a conſtant liſtener. I love to hear theſe things for my own ſake, as well as yours. I am not a little vain in having diſcovered your character, long before fortune had furniſhed occaſion for the diſplay of all your diſtinct qualities. God preſerve you, for the delight of ſuch an illuſtrious court, for the honour of Italy, and for the tender friendſhip of your moſt faithful Gemello. You were always in my heart during this excurſion into the country. My dear Farinelli accompanied me into the woods, over the mountains, through the valley, and bore a part, not only in my diverſions, but cruel hypochondriac perſecutions. I propoſed, and ſeveral times attempted, to write ſomething or other for you in order to ſend it away before my return. But in a body tormented as mine has been, and now is, the ſoul is too ill lodged to be able to perform its due functions; and poetical operations, as well as amorous, are ſo averſe

averſe to violence, that they always diſgrace the raſh mortals who attempt putting it in practice. Think what a deſperate ſituation I muſt be in, aſſailed by all my old complaints; incapable of daring to compoſe the uſual little compliments in verſe, with which the arch-dukes and dutcheſſes are accuſtomed to felicitate their auguſt parents on their name days; and inſtead of a new opera, that was wanted for ladies and gentlemen to perform, at the next carnival, I have been obliged to propoſe *Olimpiade*, in caſe the Muſes ſhould turn their backs upon me, after ſo many years of wedlock! But I would not have you think, that, with all theſe plagues and impediments, I have loſt ſight of your requeſt. I ſhall again attempt the ford, and not deſiſt till I am able to paſs it. I have now a crowd of friends about me, who are talking to me all the time I am writing; ſo that I know not what eſcapes from my pen. But my comfort is, that we underſtand each other, and ſhould not miſtake the meaning of our hearts, if we ſpoke Arabic or Chineſe.

I am obliged to write you a letter in favour of a certain *Mr. Huſcher*, who is going to Madrid in order to ſerve in the Spaniſh cavalry.

cavalry. Though it frequently happens that theſe offices are forced upon us, and we plague our friends with letters of mere form, this is not of that kind. This perſon is really of extreme good morals, of great merit, and well worthy of your patronage: ſo that I not only ſolicit for him myſelf, but the general count d'Althan, a perfect judge of his profeſſion, and your great admirer, recommends him to your notice.

Oh how impreſſed I am with the luminous grandeur of the Manzanare divinity! Why am not I a Homer! Happy you, who have occular teſtimony of ſuch ſublime virtue!

But it is time to conclude. And yet the counteſs d'Althan would kill me, if ſhe thought I had not obeyed her orders, in ſaying at houſand kind things in her name: ſo that, to ſave my life, I muſt beg of you to give me a little nod in your anſwer, that may ſerve for my juſtication. Now remember, that as one of two twins muſt ſuffer, and it is my turn, I ſhall have the generoſity to bear it with patience, in hopes that you at leaſt may enjoy that tranquil health which I have ſought in vain theſe ſeven years. Love me, however, in ſpite of my impertinent and

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teazing complaints, and believe me yours, in whatever ſtate I may be allowed to exiſt.

Vienna, October 20, 1752.

LETTER XIV.

TO THE SAME.

You will receive by the hands of *D. Antonio de Alzor*, together with this letter, *Semiramide riconoſciuta*, arranged for the uſe of your theatre royal. This trade of a cobler, I only exerciſe for my incomparable Gemello. However, I am obliged to you for having forced it upon me: as this opera, with which I never was quite ſatisfied, is now become my favourite. It has gained this conqueſt againſt the grain, which you know was no eaſy matter; but it has now acquired a kind of conſtant fire, which, being compreſſed, ought to become more intenſe. In ſhort, I am pleaſed with it: which very ſeldom has happened to any of my own productions. Before I forget it, let me tell you, that if you wiſh to cut out any

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one of the ſongs, that of Mirteo, in the third act, beginning *In braccio a mille furie*, might be omitted without much loſs *(d)*.

I ſhall now reſt myſelf for two or three days, and then take *Adriano* in hand, of which I have not the leaſt idea; and I would not read it before, leſt my head ſhould be crouded with a confuſion of images hoſtile to each other. I ſhall expend more time in the buſineſs than I ought, as I have had no amanuenſis capable of aſſiſting me, ſince *Migliavacca* entered into the ſervice of the court of Dreſden. Hence, I am obliged to write and tranſcribe all with my own hand: being hardly able to depend on that of a mere copyiſt for the laſt tranſcript which I ſend. Add to this all my numberleſs complaints, and then accuſe me of delay or negligence, if you have the heart. If ever you have any idea of machinery for the Epilogue, let me know it in time, and the day

(d) In the Paris Edit. of Metaſtaſio's Works, 1755, the ſeveral dramas that are printed twice over, were altered to oblige Farinelli, for the royal theatre at Madrid. To the title of each of theſe, Calſabigi added the words, *Corretto dall' Autore*. Since theſe alterations have been publiſhed, they have been generally adopted by compoſers, in new ſetting theſe dramas.

for

for which it is deſigned, that I may ſend you the words.

When I have finiſhed *Adriano*, I ſhall again think of the *Feſtarella*, or little entertainment which you wiſh. I ſay that I ſhall *again* think of it; as in the midſt of all my ſufferings I have always had it in mind, though no idea occured which pleaſed me. Theſe little baubles are more difficult, with reſpect to invention, than great. If you wiſh to have this aſſertion proved, pray recollect that among the old operas, though there are a few that are ſufferable, yet in the whole number of ancient theatrical pieces, there is not one *Serenata*, *Entertainment*, or *Oratorio*, that is tolerable. I have an odd thought ill digeſted, of a poſſibility of writing two parts that would ſuit the *Mingotti* and the *Caſtelli*. But at preſent I drive it from my thoughts, as I ſhould a temptation, leſt it ſhould confound my ideas. Stript as *Adriano* will be, I ſhall apply to myſelf in accommodating it: *in quantum Metaſtaſiana fragilitas patitur*.

By comparing your ſufferings with mine, you afford me no kind of comfort,; I know that the reſemblance is ſympathetic; but with regard to health, I wiſh our circum-

ſtances to be as diſſimular as poſſible. My patience is not ſufficient to bear *your* ſufferings as well as my own. Therefore get well as faſt as you can, as I am unable to turn your illneſs to any account. But, good God! while there are ſo many idle people who can come into the world merely to manure the earth, and to whom the occupation of a little bad health would be an intereſting amuſement; why are ſo many honeſt men to be tormented by it, who have employments that are uſeful to ſociety? But we muſt not pry into the arcana of Providence.

Your *Didone*, yours as my twin, and yours as being ſo advantageouſly transformed by you, has had as great ſucceſs at Vienna as at Madrid. It has been much talked of, and is ſtill in every one's mouth; imagine then, whether on theſe occaſions, your name is forgotten. In *Semiramide* you will have an opportunity of diſplaying to the world your magnificent ideas, worthy of the ſovereigns who know your worth.

Do you adore our royal patroneſs, who are happily placed ſo near her, as I do on the banks of the Danube, and as ſhe ought to be adored by all living creatures. Tell

her that I am more proud of her approbation than of that of the age we live in, or of all the ages to come. You will not allow me to aſcribe all this ſhower of favours to your influence; let me, however, owe its continuance to your benignant proſperity, and take all poſſible care, that my want of ſufficient merit to deſerve it, does not tranſpire. I know how little a thing I am, and dread the conſequence of my royal protectors knowing as much.

I entreat you to ſay for me, to the moſt reſpected and worthy count Migazzi, all that eſteem, love, and reverence, kneaded together, can ſuggeſt. The counteſs d'Althan has already read the chapter concerning him, and is never ſatiated with admiring your incomparable heart, who thus remember your valuable friends, even amidſt the tumultuous favours of fortune.

This letter is an anſwer to two of yours which arrived at eight days diſtance from each other, one from the chancellor of our court, and the other from Meſſrs. Schmitmer. I did not immediately anſwer the firſt, becauſe I wiſhed to accompany my anſwer with *Semiramide*, which I ſhall conſign to the care of Sig. Azlor, in a few minutes.

And now adieu. If you wiſh my health, take care of your own: and believe that there is no living creature who loves you more than I do.

Vienna, December 16, 1752.

We ſhall now return to our Poet's correſpondence with his friend Sig. Filipponi at Turin, to whom only two letters of the year 1752, have been preſerved.

LETTER XV.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

I SENT you long ago, by means of our friend count Canale, my *Eroe Cineſe*, which you have doubtleſs read and examined. You muſt have obſerved, that to avoid the ſimplicity of *Il Re Paſtore*, it was neceſſary to have recourſe to more complication and ornament; whether theſe ſpring from probability, whether they ſufficiently keep the mind of the ſpectators in ſuſpence till the cataſtrophe, and whether the unities are preſerved inviolate, notwithſtanding the continual change of fortune, belongs to ſuch as

you to determine. Here the piece has produced all the effect I had promiſed myſelf; but performed by four beautiful ladies, what opera would not be praiſed up to the ſkies.

I am glad to hear again of this Sig. Rabj, and wiſh him good luck with his edition; but you have not told me what ſize and letter he has choſen. This ſilence makes me fear that the ſize will be *duodecimo*, and the letter of the minute and microſcopic ſect, invented by modern bookſellers for the benefit of opticians. But enough of this: I ſhall ſuſpend my invective, till the promiſed ſpecimen arrives.

My reſpects to the amiable prieſteſs; let me hear from you and her, take care of your health, and believe me, &c.

Vienna, June 5, 1752.

LETTER XVI.

TO THE SAME.

Our friendſhip is at the proof, for negligence on both ſides. I have pardoned your rheumatiſm, and now you have to pardon the date of this letter. It tells you I am in Moravia, and I add, that I have been there

ſix weeks in the hands of tyrants, who allow me no other liberty than to grow fat, and divert myſelf. What miſery! Even this anſwer is contraband, under heavy penalties: but there is no riſk to which I would not expoſe myſelf for your ſake. Curſe on ſuch haſte! ſaid the Tortoiſe tumbling down the hill which he had been twenty years climbing. You think perhaps, that I allude to Sig. Rabj—Oh what a miſtake! Heaven keep me from imitating my executioners.

So the pious prieſteſs has made a Nun? Oh what a bleſſing! All breathes devotion around you. I recommend myſelf to the prayers of your whole family; and, not longer to prophane them, I embrace you and conclude.

Train, Sep. 16, 1752.

Several of Metaſtaſio's letters to anonymous correſpondents are inſerted in the collection, to ſome of which there are no dates; but the following, by internal marks, ſeem to have been written about 1752 or 53.

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LETTER XVII.

TO A GENTLEMAN OF MODENA.

It is extremely difficult to imagine greater politeneſs or generoſity, than that of doing any one a favour, and then, in the moſt grateful manner poſſible, thanking the perſon on whom it is conferred, for having received it. This is exactly the caſe with you, Sir, who, after having favoured me with your company, and not only tolerated but courted my importunity, treat me, in your moſt obliging letter of the 20th inſt. as if the debt of gratitude were not mine, but, on the contrary, wholly yours. If, after your departure, you had heard my opinions in all converſation, but particularly with the moſt worthy counteſs ——— concerning your politeneſs, complaiſance, and all the productions of your rare and happy genius, which we have had the good fortune to admire; it might have convinced you, in ſpite of your extraordinary modeſty, that the obligations are certainly all on our ſide, in every particular. If, however, you ſhould ſtill

have your doubts, we beg of you to return, and diſpute the point with us in perſon; and we ſhall then avail ourſelves of your goodneſs in furniſhing new claims, to oblige you to accept of the beſt teſtimonies we can give of our admiration and gratitude. In the mean time, receive this letter with the united compliments of the lady mentioned above, in teſtimony of the regard of, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

TO THE SAME.

I PERCEIVE it is your benignant intention, Sir, that I ſhould terminate the year with ſuch ſatisfaction and pleaſure, as I could not flatter myſelf without preſumption, by putting me in poſſeſſion of the excellent letter which you have deigned to write to me; for which, kiſſing the hand whence it flowed, I render my moſt humble thanks for the honour conferred upon me. I have a due ſenſe of the obligation I owe to my friends and patrons, for the favourable light in which they have placed me in your eyes, and ſhall always try not

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to diſgrace their recommendation, or make you repent the having known me.

At preſent, I ſhall neither ſend you the Drama nor Sonnet, which I promiſed, as neither is ſufficiently poliſhed for your inſpection; but you will hardly find, whenever they come, any marks worthy of a man in commerce with the Muſes. A thouſand complaints, followed by a terrible cold, have ſo much diminiſhed my ſtrength, and debilitated my mind, that all my productions muſt of courſe be languid. Bear with them, however, ſuch as they are, and believe me, &c.

LETTER XIX.

TO THE SAME MODENESE GENTLEMAN, AT PARIS.

I NEVER thought that my litttle poem could arrive at ſuch honour and happineſs, as to make me envy its fate. The being in every hand and every mouth in Italy; the having been ſo often on the * ſtage, in the princi-

* It does not appear what little Poem is here meant; His celebrated Canzonet, *La Libertà*, never was, or could be brought on the ſtage, but as a ſingle ſong.

pal cities; the having ſo rapidly paſſed over mountains and ſeas: the becoming ſo dear and familiar to the moſt diſtant kingdoms, as already to ſpeak their language; and penetrating thoſe famous regions of the ocean into which the world is ſaid to be divided, to have had the honour of being printed there, of being heard on their ſtage and applauded by the people; all theſe great and exceſſive diſtinctions would not have excited in me ſo much envy, as the information you give me, that my little Poem is become the delight of the moſt beautiful, exalted, and reſpectable ladies of France. I have always wiſhed extremely to viſit a kingdom ſo great, ſo warlike, powerful, noble, and marvellous; but now I confeſs myſelf ſo much affected by an invitation from ſuch a worthy patron, and from ladies whom I ſo much admire and venerate, that being neither able to tolerate, or gratify my exceſſive longing, it is converted into pain. If the diſtance from Vienna to Paris were not ſo great, I ſhould certainly venture to undertake the journey; but, my dear Sir, I am already old, or (to flatter myſelf) I may ſay, that I am no longer young. And to undertake ſo long a journey with ſuch a weight of years, requires neceſſity,

neceſſity, not amuſement. I have not ſufficient ſtrength to go and return. In ſhort, it appears that I am no longer fit for ſuch journeys, and the leſs ſo, as I have no time to loſe. May you, Sir, who are ſo able to enjoy the pleaſures of ſo great a kingdom with honour and delight, manifeſt your own worth, and receive the homage of ſo ſplendid a Court and Sovereign; and above all, of thoſe moſt beautiful and gracious ladies, in whoſe ſervice nothing remains for me to do, but to reverence them here, and to thank both them and you moſt humbly, for deigning to think of me in the midſt of the numerous objects with which you are ſurrounded.

LETTER XX.

TO THE SAME, AT MODENA.

I RECEIVED your letter of the 26th of laſt month, written in the midſt of the tumults of the Carnival, and your own affairs.

You ſeem deſirous of knowing my opinion of the merit of your Biſhop (*e*). The ſub-

(*e*) Monſignore Sabbatini.

limity

limity of his genius equals the profundity of his learning, and the amplitude of his erudition correſponds with his felicity of ſeizing and illuſtrating the moſt abſtruſe and difficult ſubjects. The books and paſtoral letters which he has compoſed, are ſufficiently rich in ſacred and profane learning, to make us comprehend the excellence and extent of his ideas. All Italy has confeſſed, that in his firſt employment of miniſter, as he had wholly merited the confidence of his ſovereign, ſo in the ſecond, of Biſhop, he had moſt worthily fulfilled every part of his miniſtry. His ſermons and writings ſerve as flambeaux to thoſe who wander in darkneſs and ignorance, in ſhewing them the way of ſalvation. I ſhall not mention to you the eaſe with which he has traverſed Parnaſſus. I ſhall only pray to God that the fruits of his greater labours may encreaſe the happineſs of his flock, in proportion to their excellence.

LETTER XXI.

TO THE SAME.

I RETURN you, my moſt reſpected Count, the Treatiſe of *M. Pequet*, on the duties of a miniſter

miniſter of ſtate, which you were ſo obliging as to lend me. I have attentively peruſed, and found it extremely worthy of the praiſes with which you have honoured it. It is indeed, ſomewhat leſs ample than it ſhould have been. But whoever would build on this foundation, might find a very excellent plan, and materials for conſtructing a moſt perfect edifice. But this brevity which in every other part of the work is innocent, ſeems reprehenſible, when he comes to treat of the ſincerity and good faith of a Miniſter. The author juſt hints at their utility, but ſo ſlightly, that he leaves me in doubt whether he thought them ſuperfluous or impracticable. In the falſe reaſoning of ſhort-ſighted men, utility always takes place of honeſty, as if they could be ſeparated: but after the Florentine Secretary, (Macchiavel) has elevated vice into a ſcience, this principle, no leſs falſe than miſchievous, which he almoſt juſtifies, is become the myſterious doctrine of the cabinet. All the pretended proteſtations of good faith, are now only uſed to deceive and impoſe on the credulous ſimplicity of us the poor prophane, and are of no more value, than the proteſtations of ſervitude and

obedience,

obedience, which we every day indiſcriminately uſe in mere civility.

Now it ſeems to me, as if it would be no difficult taſk to demonſtrate, for the intereſt of ſociety, and even of theſe falſe reaſoners themſelves, that, *the uſeful is conſtantly inſeparable from the honeſt, particularly in the conduct of grave and public affairs.* And I feel the truth of this axiom ſo forcibly, that I ſhould not deſpair of proving it to any one, not wholly initiated in political myſteries. What, for example, ſhould we have to oppoſe to any one who reaſoned in the following manner? An artful and inſincere miniſter, would find it impoſſible to conceal his fraudulent character, from the very nature of falſehood, which is ſo incompatible with an infinite number of circumſtances belonging to truth, that if they were capable of being maſked, it is impoſſible for them all to be foreſeen by the human mind.

A miniſter detected in falſehood, injures *his Prince, the public, and himſelf.* He injures himſelf, becauſe a prince of moderate underſtanding, will never confide in a miniſter for operations which can be effected by other means. The ſpur for ſerving him well, and the bridle for not betraying him, would

would no longer ſubſiſt. He will injure public affairs, as he will have more chicane to guard againſt: for every one will think himſelf authorized to cheat a knave. And he will likewiſe injure them from his want of weight and credit, which will retard their courſe, and ſometimes totally ſtop all treaty. Contracts will either not be made, or if concluded after a long and tedious negociation, the buſineſs will be tranſacted with a veteran negociater accuſtomed to ſell braſs for gold. And, finally, it will be miſchievous to his Prince, not only from the difficulty of treating above mentioned, but becauſe it is very natural for the fraudulent dealings of the miniſter, to be the conſequence of orders received from the Prince. A diſcredit which will operate in the ſame manner upon other Princes, as the miniſter's bad character upon other miniſters.

This, and other more clear and cloſe reaſoning, amply extended in all its parts, and enforced frequently by paſſages and examples from the moſt reſpectable ancient and modern authors, if not ſufficient to eradicate ſuch a vice, would probably prevent it from being ſo frequently practiſed without ſhame or remorſe. You are certainly furniſhed with

talents, learning, and experience, ſufficient for ſuch a laudable undertaking; and it is a ſpecies of duty incumbent on you, to ſupply the public in writing, with the theory of thoſe truths which you have ſo long practiſed.

At my return to Vienna, I ſhall preſs you ſo much to this undertaking, that in order to avoid teazing, you will at length gratify my wiſhes.

Vienna, October 5, 1752.

Antoine Pecquet, author of the work of which Metaſtaſio has been ſpeaking, was Grand-maſter of the Ponds and Foreſts of Rouen, and ſuperintendant of the military ſchool. He died in 1762, at 58. He was a man of a very cultivated mind, which he conſecrated to politics, philoſophy, and literature. His works conſiſt of an *Analyſis of the Spirit of Laws*, 3 vol. 12mo. 1757. *The Foreſt Laws of France*, 2 vol. 4to. 1753. *The Art of Negotiating*. *Thoughts on Man*. *An Eſſay on the Employments of Time*. *Parallel of the Heart, the Mind, and good Senſe*. He tranſlated the *Paſtor fido* of Guarini. The *Aminta* of Taſſo. The *Arcadia* of Sannazarius, and his verſions are read with pleaſure.

pleaſure. The remarks which Metaſtaſio made on his duties of a miniſter, may not be thought deep, by profound and ſubtil politicians; but they will be admired by plain honeſt people, for the rectitude and purity of their morality.

END OF THE FIRST SECTION.

SECTION II.

THE firſt letter which was written by Metaſtaſio, to any of his correſpondents in 1753, ſeems to have been the following:

LETTER I.

TO THE CAVALIER FARINELLI.

YOUR very dear letter of the 10th of January, which was ſent by the courier, has been more than a month on the road. I am unable to ſolve the enigma. I know that Count Uffeldt, a very exact man, did not ſend it to me till yeſterday. But I have no time at preſent, for examining the probable motives for its detention, as I am running to Court: and I have only this moment to anſwer you.

After I had done reviſing the two Operas which I forwarded to you, I reſted a few days; and then tried to develope the half explained ideas of the entertainment which

you

you deſire. I have, at length, arranged them in my head, not without calling on St. Anthony, and again reſting myſelf; but, in order that I might not have them to ſeek again, I threw them rough upon paper. When I was upon the point of delineating the entire plan, without which I never lay the foundation of any ſtructure, behold! there comes an order from Court, for a little Polyphemic Cantata, for two voices. This terminated, a thouſand others began to germinate. But to ſay the truth, all together are not worth a fig, as their preſent form is only ſuited to a maſquerade: ſometimes a little ſtrophe to be ſung, as an introduction to a dance; ſometimes as a complimentary Epilogue to a Comedy; but the Carnival is long, the Imperial family, thank God, numerous, and if all theſe pickings at me are not ſufficient to afflict me much, they occupy my thoughts at leaſt, and cheat me of them, rather than engage them. But do not be frightend at this, however. I am ſo eager to ſerve you, and the characters of the two women that I have imagined, pleaſe me ſo much, that next week I am determined, at all events, to begin to heat the iron. If I am plagued with any further commiſſions,

I will employ the time I *ought* for them, and for you what I *can*.

I have not yet delivered your letter to Porpora, nor ſhall I, till I can at the ſame time furniſh him with work. I am fearful that he will be talking of it, and excite a general curioſity throughout the city, as is the caſe whenever I am writing. I have my reaſons for avoiding this buſtle, particularly in working for a foreign court. A thing which has not happened before, for two and twenty years.

You act prudently, according to your cuſtom, in having ſomething ready in caſe of failure: my uncertain health, the manner in which I am circumſtanced: the ſluggiſhneſs of Porpora: the uncertainty after being idle ſo long, of his fulfilling your ideas: ſome ſiniſter delay of the poſt in ſo long a journey, and a thouſand other unforſeen accidents might overſet an unthinking being, but not ſuch a one as my dear Gemello, who thinks of and provides for every thing.

Adieu: I have now with me draughtſmen and taylors, in order to transform my ſerene Arch-dutcheſſes into Amazons, and the Archduke into a Grecian priſoner. In the midſt of all your hurries, love me, as much as I

love

love you, in ſpite of ſo indiſcreet and intolerable a diſtance.

Vienna, February 15, 1753.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

By dint of perſeverance, I have at length, thank heaven, accompliſhed my deſign. The day before yeſterday I wrote the final chorus, and gave to my labours the laſt paternal benediction. But the having finiſhed is not my greateſt comfort; it is the fancying that what I have done, is the leaſt imperfect of all my works. You will ſee compreſſed in a ſingle act, emotions, events, and paſſions, abundantly ſufficient to fill up the time of a long drama. The ſubject is uncommon; there is novelty in the characters. They weep without being theatrical, and laugh without buffoonery: in ſhort, if ſelf-love does not wholly blind me, the compoſition, conſidering the ſtate of my head, is ſuch as I could hardly promiſe myſelf, and ſhews plainly, that the beneficent Deity of the Manzanare has not denied me her influence.

But, alas! as nothing is to be perfect in this vale of tears, an accident has happened, which has very much imbittered the joy I had in ſerving you ſo well, and in ſuch good time. When I had half done my work, and was thinking of communicating to our Porpora the ſecret, and giving him ſome of the words to ſet, this ſame Porpora, who notwithſtanding his age, has, in general, the health of a Jeſuit; at the very moment I wanted him, was ſeized with a violent cold and fever, and what is worſe, with a ſtrong apprehenſion of dying; this not only wholly deprived him of the power of preſent application, but threatened a very long illneſs. Grieved at this unexpected inconvenience, I withheld my ſecret, and propoſed to myſelf the waiting for his recovery. But in going home, and revolving matters in my thoughts, I found that by the leaſt loſs of time, it would be morally impoſſible for the entertainment to arrive at Madrid ſoon enough for the deſtined day of performance. I had thoughts of ſending you the words without muſic; but on a ſecond peruſal of your letter, I ſaw that you had excluded that meaſure, by pointing out the impracticability, after ſo long a journey as from Germany to Spain,

Spain, to ſend the poem from Spain into Italy, to be ſet and returned in time for the preſent ſeaſon. During theſe agitations, my great eagerneſs to ſerve you ſuggeſted to me a third reſolution, which I hope will be approved, or at leaſt tolerated, as an effect of my true and ſincere zeal.

I ſent for Sig. Giuſeppe Bonno, chamber compoſer to his Imperial Majeſty, a man educated in Naples, at the expence of the Emperor Charles VI, when it abounded with able profeſſors, of good taſte, and endowed by nature, with that grace which is incompatible with extravagance; and the only one in ſhort among thoſe who are in this country, from whom I could reaſonably expect any thing tolerable. I communicated to him the ſecret, without mentioning Porpora, impoſing on him profound ſilence; I confided to him the work, animated him with the hopes of acquiring honour, and I flatter myſelf that he will fulfil my expectations, from what I have already heard, as he is far advanced in the undertaking.

Thus you will have the entertainment which I have written, in time, and if you pleaſe, ſet to muſic; which will afford you the ſatisfaction of preſenting a new piece to

your admirable Sovereign, on the deſtined day. If the muſic ſhould not pleaſe you, it may be laid aſide, and the delay will be no more than it would have been had we waited for the recovery of Porpora. The whole inconvenience will amount to no more than a ſmall preſent to Bonno, if his muſic ſhould not be approved: a preſent indeed which will neither ruin the Spaniſh monarchy, nor make the great heart of my Gemello tremble.

Now this entertainment is finiſhed, which lay on my mind, I ſhall think of the *Licenza*, or complimentary epilogue to *Semiramis*, and of the air which you wiſh to change. In the mean time, I incloſe for you the ſcene, and the dreſſes of the entertainment, for which I give you notice, that there will be ſome rehearſals neceſſary for the Recitatives, if you wiſh things to go as they ought.

But I can write no more. As ſoon as the muſic is finiſhed and tranſcribed, I ſhall pack up this little drama, and try to get it conveyed to you with the utmoſt ſpeed poſſible. If I ſhould not have hit your taſte, give me credit at leaſt for ſtriving hard to do it, and

preſerve

preſerve yourſelf with care for the ſake of your affectionate and conſtant friend.

Vienna, March, 1753.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

By the letter which I received from Madrid, of the 20th of laſt month; chiefly written by Sig. Rodolfi, I perceive that you wiſh to have the court of Apollo for the ſubject of the *Licenza* to *Semiramide*. My wiſh would be that the Goddeſs Iris ſhould ſpeak, and not Apollo; and by the leaf incloſed, read with attention, you will perceive how your thought and mine may be conciliated: ſo that I ſhall dwell no longer on the ſubject. At the ſame time, I incloſe the air ſubſtituted inſtead of that which begun thus: *Io veggo in lontananza*: and I hope it will not pleaſe you leſs than the firſt.

I ſhall write the words for the *Licenza* as ſoon as I have breathed a little: of which I have great occaſion.

The muſic of the entertainment is not yet terminated: and I impertinently ſolicit the poor compoſer every day. In the mean time,

I have acquainted Count Azlor of the occaſion we ſhall have for his aſſiſtance in forwarding it to you by the firſt courier that ſtirs.

I muſt beg of you to take care that Porpora does not hear of my packet. You know him well enough to be certain that he would not eaſily liſten to reaſon. His tongue is flippant, I am delicate: and ſhould be ſorry if my impatience to ſerve you, ſhould bring on an unpleaſant diſcuſſion. My hypondriac ſufferings are in great want of peace and tranquillity.

I have publiſhed in every converſation, your exceſſive gratitude for the gracious preſent from my moſt auguſt ſovereign, and it is impoſſible but ſhe muſt have heard of it by this time. I rejoice with my dear Gemello at the honour this will reflect upon his character. Theſe are illuſtrious occaſions which will manifeſt it to the whole world. Not a Spaniard comes hither of whom I do not inſtantly enquire after you; and all ſpeak the ſame language to me: that your munificent ſovereign's love of you, might have been the effect of good fortune; but to have acquired the love of the whole nation, muſt infallibly have been your own work. God bleſs you, and preſerve you as

you

you are, and what all thoſe who have the confidence of monarchs ſhould be.

Vienna, March 24, 1753.

My packet is directed to you, and contains my original tranſcript of the entertainment: the original ſcore of the muſic, a letter from me and a plan of the machinery for the Licenza to Semiramis, with a copy of the words.

I have heard the airs at the harpſichord, and am much pleaſed, particularly with that for Sylvia; and have great hopes that it will likewiſe have your approbation. Adieu, my dear Gemello.

Vienna, April 7, 1753.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

I WROTE two lines in great haſte, merely to accompany the parcel which contains the words and muſic of *l'Iſola diſabitata*. Oh, my dear Gemello, how have you contrived to be an honeſt man, amidſt the corruption of the harmonic tribe? This is one of the circumſtances which renders you the moſt worthy

of admiration. *Bonno*, the compoſer of the muſic I ſend you, has diſappointed me day after day, till this moment; and yet he is one of the moſt punctual maſters that I have ever known. His indolence has occaſioned the miſſing one courier. But I was determined, if poſſible, that you ſhould have this parcel time enough for your feſtival, coſt what it would. I therefore ſend it by the poſt; and according to my calculation, you will receive it the 29th inſtant. There will then be a month for ſtudying and rehearſing the parts. I believe their diſtribution was pointed out to you before; however, the repetition will coſt but little:

COSTANZA *La Signora Mingotti*
SILVIA *La Signora Caſtelli*
ENRICO *Il Soprano* (*f*)
GERNANDO *Panzacchi*,

This laſt cannot well be changed. To repreſent the huſband, he ought of courſe to be a tenor.

(*f*) It does not appear who was the principal male Soprano at this time, in the ſervice of the court of Spain. Panzacchi, a tenor of conſiderable merit, I met with at Munich, in 1772. His voice was not of the firſt claſs, but his knowledge, taſte, and expreſſion, were excellent. Mingotti came hither firſt in 1754, immediately from Spain. See *German Tour*, and *Hiſt. Muſic*, vol. iv.

I recom-

I recommend to you to have the recitative rehearſed, and to inſpire a little innocence into the Caſtelli, at leaſt during the time of repreſentation. Salute her in my name, and tell her to diſſemble her malice, for my ſake, if ſhe has any.

I ſend you at the ſame time, the words of the Licenza to *Semiramis*, and an explanation of the machinery, as it ſhould appear in the printed book. And now I have fulfilled all your commands.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

LAST week I received a very ſatisfactory letter from you, which was merely an anſwer to mine: hence, in expectation of another, I waited ere I anſwered this, in order to ſave you trouble. This week I receive another, dated the 20th of laſt month, in which there are replies, propoſals, and commiſſions: and here I ſhall try to ſatisfy you in every point.

In the firſt place, I incloſe you, a new *Licenza*, which I produced yeſterday in a miraculous manner, during the moſt cruel nervous

nervous ſufferings. You certainly remember the fable which ſuppoſes that when *Hercules* was conceived, the Sun ſtood ſtill, and lengthened the night: and this being premiſed, I hope you will find the idea of the *Licenza* not unworthy of the ſubject.

The ſame machinery will do for this as for the court of Apollo; but it muſt be remembered, that in the firſt *Licenza* Apollo ſpoke, as conductor of the muſes; and in this, only as conductor of the day; and on this account, I never call him Apollo, but merely *Sol*. For which reaſon, I wiſh you to take away from his attendants, the inſtruments which were probably aſſigned to them, that they may paſs for the attendant hours neceſſary in this new *Licenza*. The change is ſo inconſiderable, that it will be ſcarce perceptible; and if you are unwilling to adopt it, need not even be made. What pity it is that I was not born a female! can poetical docility go further? But who could reſiſt a fellow twin?

Vienna, May 19, 1753.

The *Licenza* mentioned here, is inſerted at the end of the preceding letter, and is different from that which is printed at the end of the opera of *Semiramide, corrected by the Author*,

Author, in the fifth volume of Calſabigi's edition of Metaſtaſio's works, *Paris*, 1755. Though this, as well as the other, turns upon hyperbolical compliments to Ferdinand VI. yet, as it ſeems not to have had admiſſion among his dramatic pieces, the reader ſhall be preſented with a copy of it here, as a ſupplement to the letter in which it was incloſed.

LICENZA.

Lo ſo: tacete, Ore ſeguaci: al corſo
Voi m'affrettate in van: dal cielo Ibero
Non ſperate ch'io parta in ſi gran giorno.
So ben che il mio ritorno
Dell'oppoſto emiſfero
Già l'inquieto abitator ſoſpira:
So che già deſto ammira
L'oſtinata ſua notte; il pertinace
Scintillar delle Stelle, e la dimora
Della ſorda a' ſuoi voti infida aurora.
Ma il ſoffra in pace: e penſi
Ch'oggi naſce un FERNANDO. *Antica in cielo*
Solenne legge è queſta.
Perchè naſcan gli Alcidi, il Sol ſ'arreſta.
Ma d'eſſer non pretenda
Eguale al Nume Iſpano
Benchè l'Eroe Tebano
Pur m'arreſtò coſì.
La differenza intenda
Chi dilatar mi vide
La notte per Alcide
Ma per Fernando il dì.

Ma &c.

Licenza,

Licenza, or complimentary epilogue intended for the opera of *Semiramis*, when brought on the ſtage at the court of Spain, by Farinelli, 1753.

APOLLO SPEAKS.

I know it well: ſilence ye haſty hours;
In vain ye preſs me to purſue my courſe.
Think not that I ſhall quit the Iberian ſhore,
Precipitate on this illuſtrious day.
Th' impatience of the other hemiſphere
I know, each chill'd inhabitant awakes
And wonders lingering night ſo long remains,
While pertinacious ſtars ſtill ſparkle round
And make Aurora deaf to all their prayers.
But let them patient bear the tranſient ill,
And know that this auſpicious day
Produced a FERDINAND.
But when the great Alcides firſt had birth,
Whoſe deeds from monſters was to free the earth,
I ſtopt my courſe—Be ſtill ye diſtant climes,
'Tis the celeſtial law of ancient times.

Though at the Theban heros' birth
I check'd my fiery ſteeds,
The Spaniſh chief's ſuperior worth
A different homage needs.

Great Jove himſelf I ſure ſhall pleaſe
By zeal I now diſplay:
I night prolong'd for Hercules,
For Ferdinand the day.

LETTER VI.

TO THE CAVALIER FARINELLI.

If I had been a prophet as well as a poet, I ſhould have predicted ſo happy a reception to my little piece, as to have called it rather the fortunate, than the DESERT ISLAND. The magnificent recompence which it has procured me, ſo far ſurpaſſes its intrinſic worth, that I find much more difficulty in framing proper thanks, than in bringing it forth.

You from whoſe kind and friendly hands the royal munificence paſſes into mine, muſt aſſiſt me in this dilemma: and humbly offer for me at the foot of the throne, thoſe juſt ſentiments of reſpect, reverence, and gratitude, which eagerly riſe in ſuch crowds from my heart, that neither the tongue nor the pen can give them utterance. You who have not only long known, but been in poſſeſſion of my heart, can be anſwerable for the truth of theſe expreſſions; and accuſtomed as you are to neglect yourſelf for the advantage of others, do you procure me the continuance

of

of a patronage which will do me ſo much honour in the eyes of all Europe.

It was wiſe in you to provide me ſo light a waiſtcoat. You foreſaw that the weight of royal favour would have made me ſweat even under the bear's tail. I am extremely obliged to you for ſo uſeful and friendly a thought, in which you are diſcoverable, though maſqued.

I have been preſent at Aranjuez all the time I was reading your letter. The minute, ample, clear and lively deſcription which you have given me of this feſtival, has tranſported me into Spain. I have ſeen the theatre, the ſhips, the embarkation, the enchanted palace; I have heard the trills of my incomparable Gemello (*g*); and have venerated the royal aſpect of your divinities. This affectionate attention in making me a gueſt, as much as was poſſible at ſuch a diſtance, in this delicious Iberian magnificence, and with ſo much trouble to yourſelf, awakens tender reflections on the ſtability of your matchleſs friendſhip, and binds you to my heart with ſtronger claims than ever.

(*g*) This clears up the difficulty of naming the *firſt Soprano* to whom the part of *Enrico* was aſſigned.

The

The Marquis del Paolo has written a very long letter to his brother at Vienna, in which he only ſpeaks of you. He is charmed, aſtoniſhed, and confuſed, at the polite reception which you have given him on my account. Imagine to yourſelf how I muſt have been affected by theſe conſtant, amiable, and indubitable, proofs of your partial affection for me. Where is the wonder, that you ſhould become the delight of this generous and enlightened nation? I defy Envy herſelf, not to deteſt her own character, in contemplating yours. Heaven preſerve you for the delight of your ſovereigns, the ſervice of your friends, and the juſtification of fortune; who, by your ſingle example, may defend herſelf ſufficiently from all former accuſations.

I rejoice that the Counts Valmerana go on ſo well; and rejoice the more, at their good fortune being derived from you. I have not the honour to know them; and my zeal for their ſervice is the child of the Venetian Ambaſſador, who entreated me to recommend them. I have told ſo many people that I have an affection for you, and you have ſaid to ſo many others, that you have a regard for me, that at preſent every body knows it.

Hence it is, that I am ſo continually beſieged by perſons who wiſh me to peſter you with recommendations. I defend myſelf from theſe attacks like a lion; and yet there are caſes in which it is impoſſible to drive it into ſome people's heads, that two lines of recommendation cannot be refuſed without rudeneſs and inhumanity. Now in ſuch ſtreights it is neceſſary, that we ſhould agree not to regard every letter as a draught on friendſhip, which muſt be paid by trouble and inconvenience, any more than we mean to wear the livery of every owl to whom we ſay, *your ſervant*. Whenever you ſhall ſeriouſly permit me to make uſe of your friendſhip, I will advertiſe you of it in a confidential letter; and without this previous advice, I entreat you not to regard my recommendations as transfers of your friendſhip: otherwiſe I ſhall be full of remorſe, and think myſelf importunate, to the perſon in the world whoſe kindneſs I ſhould be moſt unwillingly to abuſe.

I have told *Bonno* that his muſic ſucceeded, without entering into other circumſtances, which would perhaps have mortified him. If ever he ſhould hear any thing of its miſcarriage, I ſhall then explain the facts, and convince him, that neceſſity, not diſapprobation,

tion, occaſioned the variation which happened. In the mean time, I am unwilling to apply the remedy before the diſeaſe is felt.

I do not mean to exact from you the ſmalleſt ſacrifice in behalf of the Duke *di ſanta Eliſabetta.* I mentioned him to you without a ſecond intention. This nobleman has long reſided at Vienna. He was frequently at the Counteſs d'*Althan's converſazioni*; is very ſtudious, and particularly fond of poetry. Hence, by means of talking much together, we acquired a kind of familiarity. This made me remember to mention him to you, when I found he was going to Madrid; not without a little of that envy which I feel for all thoſe who have the happineſs to ſee and embrace you. But put no kind of violence on your inclination; do by him juſt as you would, if I had never mentioned him to you; as I have abſolutely no other wiſh, than that of leaving my incomparable Gemello to his inclinations.

Your laſt letter found me in an ephemeral fever, which obliged me to keep the houſe for ſome days, and prevented me from anſwering you as ſoon as I wiſhed. Thank heaven I am now better, but the poor head ſtill proteſts againſt hard labour. Be thank-

ful for this, if I do not plague you much longer to-day: as, according to my preſent humour, you would not otherwiſe have come off ſo eaſily.

Adieu, therefore, for this time. I do not entreat your love: as after ſuch certain and frequent proofs, it would be ingratitude to doubt of it. But I beg you, however, to believe, that my gratitude, friendſhip, and affection for you, exceed all bounds; and that with an unexampled conſtancy, I ſhall be eternally yours.

LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

THOUGH I reſpect your occupations, and try, as much as poſſible, to avoid the decorous title of tireſome; Yet I cannot refrain, every now and then, from giving you a tranſient embrace, at leaſt. Juſt to awaken in you the idea of our tender friendſhip. This temptation is conſtant; but it is encreaſed to a moſt violent degree, when any one either ſpeaks or writes to me about you. This ſame Duke *di ſanta Eliſabetta*, has talked ſo much to me of your being juſtly adored

adored by the Spaniſh nation, and of your affection for me, that, though I knew theſe particulars perfectly before, yet I want to hear them repeated every inſtant. Circumſtanced as you are, to have converted into love, that malignant fermentation which has contaminated all the poor deſcendants of Adam, with the indigeſtion of the unfortunate apple, is an enterpriſe which has few examples. All the reſt may be aſcribed to fortune; but this can only have been accompliſhed by yourſelf. I have not now the leaſt doubt of it: my accounts are too conſtant, numerous, and conſiſtent. If they are falſe, the whole univerſe muſt have conſpired in deceiving me: a thing morally impoſſible.

We ſhall here have repreſented at court, on St. Thereſa's day, my *Clemenza di Tito*. The command from my moſt auguſt patroneſs, has been ſo entirely unexpected, that, from the extreme ſhortneſs of the time, it will be miſerably executed. The ſingers, who have been collected in eight days, are not equal to the enterpriſe for which they are called. They either conſiſt of people unknown, or worſe. The Caſarini, the Marini, the Ghiringella, the Curioni, Mariannino,

Mariannino, and Ottani, a painter, are the heroes and heroines of this feſtival (*b*). The compoſer is a certain Adolfati, a Venetian, ſettled at Genoa; all fruits wholly foreign to our climate. I ſhall give you no account of their ſucceſs, becauſe in ſuch caſes, every one is endowed with the gift of prophecy.

Previous to this performance, I ſhall go into the country, to refreſh my lungs with the balſamic air of the mountains of Moravia, in order to fortify my ſtomach for the doſe. But I ſhould neither have been able to hope for a fortunate journey, nor advantage from my reſidence, if I had ſtirred without embracing my dear Gemello, and thanking him for his partiality to me, which I hear from all quarters. You may ſafely believe that mine is perfectly reciprocal, and that I neither will nor can be otherwiſe than yours.

Vienna, September 11, 1753.

(*b*) The *Caſarini* was here in 1746, as ſecond woman, and the Curioni in 1755, as third, and were in no higher favour with the Engliſh, than with Metaſtaſio. Of Ottani ſome account is given, in the *Italian Muſical Tour*, art. TURIN.

LETTER VIII.

TO THE SAME.

I WISH to anſwer your letter of the 22d of laſt month, moſt amply, with reſpect to your indiſpoſition; and very briefly, on account of my own. But what my poor head will ſuffer me to do I know not; ſo cruelly has it been tormented for theſe four days paſt, by my uſual tenſion of nerves, which irritate me, from time to time, beyond that portion of patience with which I am furniſhed for common inſults. But you are not to blame; and it is not fair that you ſhould be puniſhed with tireſome complaints of my ailments. What I ſpeak and write to you, my dear friend, is what I think, not what I ſay; and I do not write all, leſt I ſhould be thought by thoſe who are not acquainted with me, one of the common worſhippers of your fortune: which I only love in you, as an inſtrument, by means of which you diſcover the good qualities of your heart: among which I muſt, for my own ſake, enumerate the admirable conſtancy of your friendſhip.

If it is true that you are pleaſed at all the world knowing it, you may be perfectly ſatisfied; for our reciprocal affection is ſo public in every part of Europe, that I am perpetually teazed by different people from Naples, Rome, Venice, Milan, and a hundred other parts of Italy and Germany, to implore your protection. I am extremely flattered by this; but aſſure you, that I frequently paſs for a miſanthrope, for not adding my importunities to the too great number of thoſe with which you muſt be conſtantly peſtered.

Before I received your minute relation, I was informed of the royal pomp and maſterly exactneſs, with which my *Semiramide*, thanks to your experience and aſſiduity, was brought on the ſtage. I am pleaſed, but not ſurpriſed; it is eaſy to foreſee the reception of what you undertake.

You have treated with *Jomelli* in your own way, and he has fulfilled the articles in his: that is to ſay, like a *blockhead* of the firſt claſs. I pity him; but his indolence is ſo exceſſive, that it produces all the effects of malice. I fear that fortune will be tired of favouring him. God ſend he may ever ſubdue this infirmity. In the mean time, I applaud your

reſolution

reſolution of never again uſing ſo uncertain an inſtrument. *Signora Mingotti* will many times in her life regret the banks of the Manzanare, which ſhe now ſo unadviſedly abandons. I believe the ſacred words *neſcitis quid petatis*, are particularly applicable to this kind of people.

I wrote you word ſometime ago, that the Mattei was a woman not without merit; but I did not conceal from you, that I ſhould have wiſhed for a little more dignity in her figure and voice. Both are good, but not quite ſufficient for the firſt parts. However, ſcarcity has ſeconded her pretenſions in Italy.

I hope ſhe will not have the imprudence to overate herſelf in negotiating with you for the theatre royal. I am not in a ſituation to aſſiſt you in treating with her, as we are not in correſpondence. She has made all Italy believe that I was in love with her: a falſity which does ſuch diſcredit to my good taſte, has ſo much offended me, that I have never anſwered the letters ſhe has written to me, for fear of giving weight to a fable which has no foundation in truth. If you ſhould ſee her, you will judge, and do juſtice to your friend.

I ſhall

I ſhall turn the circumciſion of *Alexander* in my thoughts. But my dear Gemello, the enterpriſe frightens me; for this drama is all action, not words. The ſcenes are ſo connected, that retrenching any one, would diſlocate the machine.

If *Semiramis* was long, what opera can be ſhort? However, what is the work I would not undertake to pleaſe you? I muſt tell you, however, that the obſtinate perſecutions of my head will not permit much application. I ſhould be inconſolable, if I acted the part of Jomelli.

I beg you will preſent my affectionate and conſtant reſpects to *Monſignor Migazzi*, and to the Duke of *Santa Elizabetta*; I envy you their company, as much as I envy them the enjoyment of yours. Oh that I could once more embrace my dear Gemello! But how I rave? Theſe are poetical ideas; and yet I will give way to as much hope, as will cheriſh a wiſh of which I would not be deprived. Adieu, my excellent Gemello. Pity my head, and believe me, &c.

P. S. I directed your letter to our *Porpora*, and he has ſent me the incloſed in anſwer, without a word to myſelf: and I forward it, without another word on the ſubject.

Il

Il Saſſone (Haſſe) left this place about two months ago. He ſpoke much to me about you, and with that eſteem that is your due. However, he ſeemed extremely mortified, that you had anſwered none of the letters he had written to you. I ſuggeſted to him, that it was likely they had miſcarried, and he begged of me to inform you of them. I fulfill my promiſe to a man who deſerves as much conſideration for his character and manners, as for his profeſſional excellence.

Vienna, November 30, 1753.

LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE now to anſwer your moſt affectionate letter of the 11th of November, with which I received a copy of *Semiramis*, in its Spaniſh dreſs. I thank you for your kind attention, and proceed to anſwer your requeſt.

When I wrote ADRIANO, I tried to make the parts of *Adrjano* and *Farnaſpe* as equal as poſſible; as well as thoſe of *Emirena* and *Sabina*. Indeed *Adriano* and *Sabina* are, in fact, the principal characters; they form the principal

principal ſubject of the drama, and their importance becomes more conſiderable, as the buſineſs advances. Notwithſtanding this, from the vivacity of the firſt ſcenes of *Farnaſpe*, all the ſingers have been deceived, and have often made me the ſame requeſt as you do at preſent. It ſeems a matter of choice whether *Adriano* and *Sabina*, or *Farnaſpe* and *Emirena*, are regarded as the principal parts. But in fact, *Adriano* is the title of the opera, and between him and *Sabina* the principal buſineſs is tranſacted. Emirena is only introduced to try the virtue of Adriano, who finally vanquiſhes himſelf; and this triumph of his virtue, is the action repreſented. The diſtribution therefore of the parts, depending more on policy than ſcience, does not ſeem to belong to me; who not being on the ſpot, am ignorant of many circumſtances neceſſary to be known, previous to a deciſion. All I can ſay with ſincerity is, that if I were a firſt man ſinger, I would repreſent the part of *Adriano*, and if a female Siren, it would pleaſe me more to be a Roman Empreſs, full of generoſity and virtue, than a ſlave, enamoured like a cat.

I have already circumciſed the firſt act of *Aleſſandro*. Oh what a butchery! I'll have cut

cut out two hundred and ſixty-ſix verſes, and three airs. My dear Gemello, this moſt ungrateful buſineſs ſhould not have been mine. To make one's ſelf a Eunuch with one's own hands, is a ſacrifice of which there are few examples. But it muſt be done, and I hope the repreſentation will receive advantage from it.

You cannot poſſibly wiſh more for a new opera of my writing, than I to furniſh you with one; and I have it always in my thoughts; but not to tire you with the repetition of all the cock and bull ſtories which I have formerly told you, I beg of you to reflect, that on the birth-day of my auguſt miſtreſs, there was an opera repreſented here at court, and this opera was *La Clemenza di Tito.* This text needs no comment. Addio.

Vienna, December 15, 1753.

No more than two letters to his friend Filipponi, of this year, have been preſerved. The firſt is not very important; but the ſecond, which concerns the long meditated edition of his works, by Rabj of Turin, will furniſh the reader with the author's own ideas of all his productions, which were then ready for the preſs.

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LETTER X.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

YOUR laſt letter of the 14th of April, afforded me very great pleaſure, like all the reſt, except that this was rendered unuſually reliſhing, by long faſting from your literary food. There has not been the leaſt change in my health, either for better or worſe, in the courſe of the whole winter, and ſpring. I have been nearly eight years at war with my hypochondriac complaints; but, in ſpite of ſuch long trials, we have never yet found the way to an accommodation. In other reſpects, I eat, ſleep, and in the midſt of the moſt cruel attacks, put ſo good a face on the matter, that I am more regarded with envy than pity. The beſt of it is, that I give myſelf no more trouble in trying to get rid of theſe torments, as hope has entirely left me. I reckon that I ſhall have a hump-back, which I am diſpoſed to carry patiently, for the reſt of my life, with as much care and grace as poſſible (*i*).

(*i*) Twenty years after this letter was written, the poet was ſomewhat curved by age; but his clerical cloak of Abate, rendered it very little viſible.

I was very glad to ſee the Italic type of your *Rabj*, becauſe it makes me hope that the Roman will be as good. Indeed I ſhould adviſe him to uſe the latter for the verſe. The firſt will pleaſe learned Italians, but all the reſt of Europe, particularly the ladies, prefer the Roman. I ſhall be glad to ſee a proof; at all events the edition will be ſeen by our great grand-children, and we ſhall hear of it in the Elyſian fields. I thank you for the beautiful ſonnet which you communicated to me, and partake of the pain it has coſt you; but we muſt not unbind the wounds.

Vienna, May 7, 1753.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

In ſpite of all the eloquence of your excellent letter of the 30th of June, I would not have you flatter yourſelf that your hypochondria is worthy of being compared with mine; for this plain reaſon, that it admits of deſcription. The complaints which honour me with their moſt vigilant company, diſdain the limits of eloquence, unleſs theſe evils ſhould be like wives, each of whom, they

they ſay is thought by the huſband, more ugly than his neighbour's.

The ſpecimen ſent me of the type intended to be uſed by *Sig. Rabj*, is entirely to my ſatisfaction. I ſhall ſend him a liſt of all that I have written, or rather of all that has been publiſhed for mine. And he will diſtribute to each volume the operas and dramatic compoſitions, as well ſacred as profane, according to the bulk of its contents; which by a mixture of long and ſhort, may eaſily be rendered uniform. In ſhort, the following ſeems the proper arrangement. All the Dramatic poetry, ſacred and profane, long and ſhort, ſhould be aſſigned to the firſt volumes; ſo that each may contain four or five pieces at moſt; mixing Oratorios, occaſional pieces, or other dramatic compoſitions, ſufficient to render the volume of a proportionate ſize, without attention to chronology, which is of no conſequence to the author or reader (*k*).

(*k*) Such an attention, however, would have been of great uſe to a muſical hiſtorian, in aſcertaining the time when a great compoſer or ſinger firſt began to flouriſh; and in the laſt edition of his works, printed at Paris after his own memorandums, the time when, as well as occaſion and place where, each of his dramatic pieces was firſt performed, have been recorded.

After theſe, the Lyric poetry ſhould have place: that is, the Cantatas, Sonnets, and Canzonets. And, finally, the pieces which have been printed at Venice, by Bettinelli, in the third volume of his quarto edition, under the title of *Additions*. By theſe are implied whatever I wrote at a premature age, or rather in my puerile ſtate; as the tragedy of *Juſtin*. Pray deſire him to place theſe abominable *Additions* at the end of all the reſt, preceded by the Venetian printer's advertiſement; with this running title at the top of the page; (like act i. act ii, &c.) in order, when the book is opened by chance, that my childiſh productions may not be aſcribed to mature age. I have reduced into a better form, *Didone*, *Adriano*, *Semiramide*; and have added a fourth character to the *Ballo Cineſe*. I have written a ſhort drama for Madrid, entitled *L'Iſola diſabitata*. I have collected my cantatas, and freed them from the blunders of the preſs; adding ſome inedited pieces, and excluding thoſe that have been falſely aſcribed to me. All theſe I ſhall make no difficulty in communicating to *Sig. Rabj*; but he muſt appoint ſomebody in Vienna to tranſcribe and tranſmit them to him.

Say to the venerable prieſteſs, and amiable and ſerene little Nun, in my name, all that a tender friend, father, and huſband, can ſuggeſt.

Vienna, July 26, 1753.

LETTER XII.

TO THE ABATE PASQUINI.

YOUR gratitude goes beyond the pillars of Hercules, and I dare not ſtop ſhort of you; a good journey to you: and may I ſee you well at your return.

Aſſiſted by the ſweetmeats of ſome gracious expreſſions in your letter, I have contrived to introduce a converſation concerning your affair with the Count de Richecourt, hoping by this means to ſhorten the long period of formality for which you have ſuch an averſion. He laughed, applauded, and allowed that you merited the Iſland of *Barataria*; but ſaid that it was impoſſible to diſpenſe with the forms conſecrated by cuſtom. So, my dear friend, make uſe of him with œconomy, that he may not fail you at your need.

All

All I can do, will be done; but that all is an atom, impalpable to the will which I have to ſerve you. You are not likely to grow fat upon ſuch zeal; but it will at leaſt be a manifeſtation of the conſtancy, and ſincerity, with which I ſhall ever be yours.

Vienna, July 19, 1753.

No writer ſeems to have framed compliments and felicitations with more grace, facility, and elegance, than our author.

The brother of his friend, *Sig. Argenvilliers*, the banker at Rome, having at this time, been created a Cardinal, produced the two following letters.

LETTER XIII.

TO SIG. ARGENVILLIERS.

You know how much I owe you, and are not ignorant of my affection; you have therefore in your hands the meaſure of my joy at the deſerved promotion of your moſt worthy brother to the ſacred purple. Indeed my joy is ſo exceſſive, that it has degenerated into the temerity of writing to him, without

a ſufficient title to his indulgence for ſuch a liberty. Do you, my dear friend, make my apology for the impropriety of this tranſport. If you believe that the incloſed letter will not offend, ſeal, preſent, and honour it with the advantage of your countenance; but if you ſhould be of a different opinion, ſpare me the ſhame of becoming importunate, by too great an eagerneſs to ſhew my reſpect and veneration: I ſhall patiently await your deciſion.

Envy, which is one of the leaſt defects of which I feel myſelf culpable, has, however, a little diſturbed me at the number of friends who are ſurrounding you on this occaſion. And why cannot I be of the number? Patience!

LETTER XIV.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE now to anſwer your moſt obliging letter of the 27th of November, which confirms the well merited promotion of his Eminence the Cardinal your brother, and the enlightened diſcernment of his Holineſs, who would not allow ſo uſeful an inſtrument to

be far from the throne. I take ſo much part in this event, that it ſeems as if I participated of the advantages, and the honour. May you, my dear friend, to the utmoſt extent of my wiſhes, enjoy a pleaſure ſo ſolid, and ſo much approved by all good men! Continue your affection for me, and preſent to his Eminence, your brother, my moſt reſpectful duty.

Vienna, December 17, 1753.

LETTER XV.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI,

I WAS obliged to defer anſwering your laſt letter of the 15th of December, by the impediment of a little voyage to Parnaſſus, which I have been conſtrained to make againſt my will, and which has been attended with more pains than profit. I am now to expiate the *mora, ſacculo parato.*

You, who have procured me the ineſtimable favours, with which the worthy *Abate Paſini*, and his moſt noble ſociety have honoured me, will I hope, return them, in my name, with the ſame eloquence, the moſt lively proteſtations of my gratitude and

reſpect, without parſimony of expreſſions; and, as a proof of my acknowledgements, adviſe them ſincerely, on my part, to deſiſt from the deſign of honouring my writings with a Turin republication. There are already in every city of Italy, more editions than contribute to my credit. They can be purchaſed every where at the loweſt price, and I am certain, that this noble ſociety would run the riſk of being great loſers, in ſpite of their moſt prudent precautions of a ſmall ſize, inſignificant cuts, the addition of inedited pieces, and dedications, &c. But what ought chiefly, and abſolutely, to deter them, is the new edition printing at Paris, of which I have ſeen ſeveral proofs, and which is ſo far advanced, that it will be publiſhed in a very ſhort time.

Vienna, 14, 1754.

LETTER XVI.

TO THE SAME.

THE friendly impatience of my dear Filipponi at my ſilence, ſweetly ſtimulates activity, and exacts from me a moſt grateful acknowledgement. Your letters are always moſt

moſt acceptable to me, and I ſhould more frequently deſerve them, if the number of mad Italians who peſter me with their correſpondence, allowed me a moment's leiſure on poſt days. But my dear friend, I am the butt at which all the inſects of Parnaſſus are conſtantly ſhooting. I leave the chief part of them to hum and buz, at their pleaſure; but thoſe whom the indiſpenſible rules of ſociety oblige me to reſpect, are more than ſufficient to abſorb all my time and patience. I know that I am not only ſure of your forgiveneſs, but compaſſion. I ought to have anſwered the Paris editor of my works two months ago; but have not been able to obtain a moment for that purpoſe. God knows what this good chriſtian will ſay of me. And, indeed, what will you ſay of me? The hiſtory is not long. The impreſſion ought to have been out next month; but I fear that my involuntarily delays will prevent it.

I beg a thouſand tender compliments may be preſented in my name to the venerable prieſteſs, and to all the ſacred and profane Filipponic family. My health deſerves no notice either from its good or bad ſtate; I therefore haſtely embrace you, and beg the

continuance of your affection, and belief that I am, &c.

Vienna, May 17, 1754.

LETTER XVII.

TO SIG. RANIERI DE CALSABIGI (*l*).

THE information with which Sig. *Calſabigi* has favoured me, concerning the elegant edition of all my poetical writings, of which he has lately been ſo obliging as to undertake the care, has not a little excited my vanity. Reaſoning in my own favour, as we are all but too prone to do, I flatter myſelf, that the enterpriſe implies ſome call for

(*l*) The editor, panegyriſt, and afterwards dramatic rival, and cenſurer, of Metaſtaſio's ſtyle. He is author of the three operas of *Orfeo*, *Alceſte* and *Paride*, which were ſet by Gluck, in a new dramatic ſtyle, that has been adopted by the French, and violently praiſed by all thoſe who love poetry better than muſic. The French who have frequently fine voices, but no great ſingers, do well to depreciate the vocal abilities of the Italians, which can enchant all other foreign nations, without their having the leaſt knowledge of the language in which they ſing. Indeed it is not merely the ſimplicity of Gluck's ſtyle that pleaſes the French, but the having formed it upon *Lully* and *Rameau*, to whoſe ſtrains Gallic ears will long continue partial.

my

my works: that this call promiſes patrons; and that theſe may perhaps procure them the general favour of ſo cultivated, ingenious, and enlightened a nation as that of France; an honour to which I never before durſt elevate my hopes, further than merely to keep deſire alive. To find therefore the ſuperintendance of this enterpriſe in ſuch expert and friendly hands as yours, aſſures me, that, in future, I ſhall have no errors but my own to bluſh for; and not thoſe that, thanks to the ſhameful careleſſneſs of printers, abound in the numerous editions with which it is hard to ſay, whether our country has hitherto perſecuted or diſtinguiſhed me.

Though my paternal tenderneſs may ſafely confide in the affectionate tutelage which you have undertaken of my children, it is however my duty to endeavour to eaſe you as much as poſſible of the weight and fatigue with which you have loaded yourſelf; and not decline aſſiſting you as much as my indiſpenſible employments, uncertain health, and great diſtance from the preſs, will allow.

If it be true, that wholeſome council is of any value, I ſhall begin by adviſing you not to depend on the Venetian editions, not even that of 1733, in quarto, as to the opinion of its

its ſuperiority over its corrupt followers, the the perpetuating many errors is due. Theſe editions have been multiplied from year to year, and augmented in ſize, without my conſent, by cantatas, and canzonets, under my name, which I never wrote; or if mine, ſo lame, incorrect, and disfigured, that I ſcarcely could recogniſe them.

The editions therefore of Rome, Naples, Milan, Piacenza, and in ſhort, all that have come from the Italian preſs, copied from the early editions of Venice, add to their own, all the impurities of their muddy ſource.

To render your edition ſuperior to every other, I ought to undertake a general correction of all my writings, and tranſmit to you a fair copy of them: An enterpriſe which I have no time to take in hand, nor you to wait for its completion. All I can therefore do, is merely to point out to you a few ſuch errors as, from their enormity, are fixed in my memory; and, afterwards, conſign and recommend to your learning, diligence, and friendſhip, the diſcovery and correction of the reſt. Who knows but I may be a gainer by this want of leiſure, to do my own work? your partiality for the author, may incline you ſometimes to aſcribe to the printers, his own faults, and procure him corrections,

which your delicacy would perhaps have deprived him of, had you known their true origin.

But that my whole aſſiſtance may not be reduced to mere advice, I ſend you, in the firſt place, a very correct tranſcript from the original MS. of my cantatas, which have either not been publiſhed, or are entirely freed from the injuries which they have long ſuffered from unſkilful hands.

You have likewiſe LE CINESI, formerly printed under the title of a *dramatic compoſition, written as the prologue to a dance*; but now augmented with a new character, which by enlivening the buſineſs, and rendering the conduct of the piece more intereſting, may, perhaps, give it ſome ſmall pretenſions to novelty.

To this I add my *Iſola diſabitata*; a drama in which I have ſtudiouſly tried to preſerve the unities, notwithſtanding the time of repreſentation is ſtrictly limited to an hour. This, though lately printed at Madrid, has not yet appeared in any preceding collection of my works.

With theſe pieces you will receive four of my firſt dramas, new written; and, as I think, conſiderably improved. Theſe are

Didone,

Didone, *Adriano*, *Semiramide*, and *Aleſſandro*; in which I thought there appeared ſome tedioufneſs in the action, juvenile ambition in the ornaments, uncertainty in the characters, or coldneſs in the cataſtrophe: defects which eaſily eſcape the thoughtleſſneſs of youth; but which are not ſo eaſily forgiven by that mature judgment which is derived from years and experience: an advantage which coſts us too much, not to make a good uſe of it. Finally, I tranſmit to you a faithful liſt of all my poetry of every kind, which has hitherto ſeen the light. And with the aſſiſtance of this, you may ſafely exclude from your edition, as ſpurious, thoſe pieces which, with too much generoſity, have been aſcribed to me in the Venetian editions.

I ſhould have wiſhed, that none of my poetical compoſitions might appear in the Paris impreſſion, which ſavoured too much of my adoleſcent ſtate; particularly the tragedy of *Juſtin*, written by me at fourteen years of age.

But I foreſee that you would be unwilling to render your impreſſion leſs ample than the others; taught by experience, that the merit of an edition is more frequently determined by the ſize, than contents. I beg of you, therefore, to ſpare my bluſhes as long as you can,

can, by throwing into the utmoſt confines of the laſt volume, all the pieces which were printed by Bettinelli in the firſt edition, under the title of *Additions*, and not forget to let them be prefaced by my chronological defence.

You muſt not expect any new proteſtations of my gratitude, nor further recommendations of my writings to your care. I know that the firſt would be inſufficient, and the ſecond unneceſſary; I ſhall therefore add nothing to the ſincere aſſurances of regard, with which I have the honour to be, &c.

Vienna, March 9, 1754.

LETTER XX.

TO THE ABATE PASQUINI.

You do me juſtice, in believing me ſincerely attached to you, and injure me much if you imagine that the infrequency of your letters can incline me to doubt of your affection.

The proofs I have tried to give of my friendſhip, are ſureties for yours; and I defy all the ſilence of *Harpocrates*, to make me doubt of it. Notwithſtanding this, your letter

letter was moſt welcome; as by its chearful complexion, I imagined that neither moral nor phyſical cauſes obliged you at preſent to exerciſe your patience. I congratulate myſelf as well as you, upon this; as I have conſtantly participated in all the rigour of your ill fortune.

And ſo you are determined to paſs from the ſtage to the pulpit? *Bonis avibus.* Your extreme love of truth preceded this phenomenon. Happy you, who will be the Maeſtro di Capella, and the actor of your own dramas, and who will undertake to perſuade a people already perſuaded! If Sienna was a few ports nearer, I ſhould feel myſelf diabolically tempted to be converted by you; but at ſuch a diſtance, I can only recommend my converſion to your prayers, my friendſhip to your memory, and my ſervices to your commands. Adieu.

Vienna, May 27, 1754.

We muſt not omit the uſual annual extracts from our Bard's letters to his friend the banker at Rome; to whom thoſe of buſineſs are generally embelliſhed with politeneſs, affection, and ſometimes with original wit and pleaſantry.

In

In a letter written to him July 29th of this year, after accounts were ballanced, he ſays: "Thus all our buſineſs is ſettled to the preſent time, except the uſeleſs and injurious excuſes with which you have affronted me: as if I could be uneaſy at ſo trifling a delay in remitting the uſual ballance of our accounts! In the firſt place, I ſhall fairly own to you, that I never had once thought of it; as my temperament correſponds marvellouſly with my circumſtances, which have never oppreſſed me with many œconomical cares. And I muſt likewiſe tell you, that without injuring yourſelf and me, you could not imagine that a man could be at all diſturbed about a paltry account, who knowing and loving you as I do, would chearfully confide to you his whole ſelf, certain of its being in better hands than his own. I therefore expect an excuſe for your excuſes, and inſiſt on it, that in future you believe me to be a better judge of the weight and worth of ſuch friends, as well as of my obligations to you. Appeaſe me with ſome commiſſion."

In his next letter to him, he ſays: Advice of money placed to a man's own credit is always ſure of being well received. Con-

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ſider then how welcome muſt that be which comes from you, who have the power, by your letters, of ſweetning every kind of loſs. I return you my moſt ſincere and lively thanks for your exactitude, and ſtill more for that affectionate friendſhip which animates your moſt indifferent expreſſions, and which I reckon the moſt pleaſant and profitable part of our intercourſe"—"The cold has driven me back to Vienna, without any ſenſible advantage from my excurſion this year into Moravia. I hope you have been more fortunate in your country retreat, and armed yourſelf againſt the aſſaults of winter, who has already ſent hither his precurſors."—"Your affectionate letter of the 16th of laſt month, confirms, by your obliging ſolicitude for my health, the ſincerity of your love; a poſſeſſion of which I am more proud and jealous, than of the moſt precious of my acquiſitions. My extraordinary complaints, thank heaven, are ſubdued; and I now remain in the uſual moſt faithful company of habitual hypochondriacs, which, during many years have exerciſed my patience."

"Her Majeſty, my Patroneſs, was inclined to viſit Trieſte, and Croatia, during the fine weather, and preparations were made for it; but

but all at once the idea was abandoned, or at leaſt its execution deferred. Concerning a journey to Milan, I have not heard a ſyllable, nor do I believe it ever was in meditation. But if it were to take place, without a poſitive ſovereign command, contrary to my repeated ſupplications, I ſhould not be in the ſuite.

You cannot imagine how inconvenient it would be, to ſuch a little inſect as me, to be obliged to follow the court. I have a journey to Rome in my head; but then it muſt be free, and tranquil, that I may enjoy with my whole ſoul, the company of ſuch a worthy and dear friend as you are. In the mean time, receive my moſt affectionate ideal embraces, and believe me &c."

Metaſtaſio had been ſtimulated to think of a journey to Rome this year, not only by his filial affection for that city, and the many relations and friends it contained; but by a letter from the Marcheſe Partrizi, who had been deſired by the Pope himſelf to invite him thither, to which the following is an anſwer.

LETTER XIX.

TO THE MARCHESE GIOVANNI PATRIZI.

WITHOUT that natural ſenſibility of heart, with which I have been long tormented, my contagious commerce for ſo many years with the moſt violent paſſions, would have been ſufficient to ſoften me: if, according to poetical canons, it is neceſſary to feel ourſelves, before we can communicate feeling to others; judge then of the effect of your ingenious, obliging, and unexpected letter. If a few ſimple lines from you, Sir, in teſtimony of that regard of which I am ſo ambitious, yet hopeleſs of meriting, were ſufficient to affect and agitate me, where was the neceſſity of attacking me with all the ſeducing powers of eloquence? why overpower me with arms againſt which there is no defence? The exaggeration of the duties of a citizen towards his country; the diſplay of reciprocal friendſhip; of the ties of blood; and the malicious incitement of my poetical vanity, by aſſurances of a flattering reception from the public, were *ſtimuli* more than ſufficient

ficient to diſtreſs me. But not content with theſe, determined on victory, to oppreſs me, you preſent to my mind, not only the benevolent ſovereign remembrance, but almoſt the beneficent impatience of a prince, whom I not only venerate with the ſubmiſſion of a ſubject, but reſpect with the gratitude of a diſciple, and honour with the reverence of a ſon. If no other victory was propoſed, than to inflame me with the deſire of once more viſiting the Tarpeian rock, I was vanquiſhed before the aſſault was made. I love my country; remember my friends; have a tender affection for my kindred; and am not exempt from the vanity of my peers; and propoſe, as the ſummit of all felicity, to obtain that deſired kiſs, which I always flatter myſelf I ſhall ſome time or other impreſs upon the moſt holy foot. But who, my moſt reſpected Marquis, *who can do all that he wiſhes?*

Of the Pope it may be ſaid: *omnia poteſt*; but never of a poor inſect of Parnaſſus, like me, obliged to proportion his deſires exactly with his faculties. If you ſhould happen to think that I have a hundred horſemen on the banks of the *Iſter*, as *Aleſſandro Guidi* had on thoſe of Alphœus, you do my ſtable too much honour, which is by no means ſo

magnificently furniſhed. Beſides, my journey muſt be by land, on which we do not travel ſo rapidly as in the clouds. I know that to a gentleman who in his travels has merited the praiſe of Ulyſſes: *Qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes*, the difficulties of a little journey from Vienna to Rome, appears ridiculous; but in the firſt place, it muſt be remembered, that I am no longer in that ardent time of life, when inconveniences are the foundation of pleaſure; and that what vigour remains muſt not be laviſhed imprudently, as it is ſufficiently diminiſhed daily, by the treachery of time. Beſides that, I have been a bird of court, almoſt *ab immemorabili*; not one in the woods, but uſed to eaſe, comfort, and repoſe; and unable to fly here and there, at a venture, expoſed to all the ſeverities of the ſeaſon; ſo that to be ſafe conducted, I muſt be tranſported in my cage, with my water-glaſs, and keeper, to ſupply my wants. But to leave all theſe ſilly metaphors, I have lived four and twenty years under the auſpices of an adorable ſovereign, who ſupports me with a munificence, more worthy of herſelf than of me. A ſovereign, who, when ſurrounded by the new cares of a throne,

throne, and attacked by all the powers of the univerſe, not only deigned to think of, but provide for me. A ſovereign whom then it became my duty to follow through all the viciſſitudes of fortune, and to refuſe, as I did, during the moſt violent rage of the tempeſt, to enter at any of the doors which were ſpontaneouſly thrown open for me in the different courts of Europe. A ſovereign, in ſhort, who, at the very time that I bluſhed at the uſeleſſneſs of my employment, never ceaſed conferring benefits on me, and giving public and repeated teſtimonies of her conſtant clemency and diſpoſition to ſerve me.

Tell me now, my dear Marquis, whether the repugnance which I feel to the aſking ſuch a Patroneſs leave to abſent myſelf from her, even for a few months, ariſes from a romantic delicacy, or from that ſenſe of duty which belongs to an honeſt man? And can I with propriety aſk this permiſſion, when the moſt auguſt and flouriſhing Imperial family, which, favoured by heaven, is happily become numerous, begins to be initiated in our language, and in the myſteries of harmony, and to make me daily hope for an opportunity for the exerciſe of my obedience?

Would it be believed? and yet, amidſt all theſe moſt ſolid reaſons to the contrary, a voyage to Rome is not only deſirable, but my longing to put it in practice rendered more impatient, by the difficulty to gratify it. Hence the preſent neceſſity of diſobeying your obliging command, *nil mihi reſcribas, attamen ipſe veni*, does not keep imagination idle; I already enjoy the hoſpitality which you ſo generouſly have prepared for me; I paſs with you through all the triumphal ſtreets of my dear Rome: I breathe the venerable air of the Vatican; *et quo non poſſum corpore, mente feror.* This, my dear Marquis, is at preſent all I am allowed to enjoy.

Vienna, 1754.

This invitation to Rome, is further explained in the following letter.

LETTER XX.

TO THE ABATE PASQUINI.

The ſmiling deſcription of your paſtoral life, has made me wiſh to adopt it; particularly when I reflected on the chearful humour it had inſpired, ſo different from that which uſed to reign in your letters. I congratulate you on the occaſion, and hope [illegible] apoſtolic

apoſtolic miniſtry will occaſion no alteration.

It is moſt true, that at Naples, Rome, Florence, Milan, and indeed through all Italy, there has been a report, that I intended viſiting my native country: and this has circulated during three or four months, without my being able to trace its origin: But, on the contrary, it is moſt true, that I have no otherwiſe thought of it, than I have done for theſe four and twenty years paſt: that is, always propoſing this journey, but never reſolving upon it. The fable has gone ſo far, that the *Servus ſervorum* has made the Marquis Patrizi write to me on the ſubject. His Holineſs was formerly my maſter, during my apprenticeſhip at the Forum; and I ſhould be very glad to ſee him again, now he is become maſter of all the faithful; but though this is a wiſh in the catalogue of honeſt *deſiderata*, yet it muſt not be blindly indulged. I have a million of little impediments, which, united together, become as invincible as the hairs in the tail of the Sertorian horſe. I do not, however, relinquiſh the hope; and if ever I quit my ſhell, you will ſee me at your *Formiano* *. I with you

* Anthill.

a more abundant crop from your pulpit, than you gathered from your fields. I thank you for your affectionate remembrance, and aſſure, you that your generous acknowledgements are far behind my wiſh to ſerve you, which greatly ſurpaſſes my abilities.

Vienna, Auguſt 19, 1754.

LETTER XXI.

To the CAVALIER MONTECUCCOLI, *on his ſending him a copy of* CHELONIDES, *a tragedy written by Monſignor* SABATINI, *Biſhop of Modena.*

THANKS to you, moſt obliging Count, for your precious gift of the beautiful *Chelonides*, and for the communication of the ſecret. I am proud of the keenneſs of my ſcent. From the firſt time that I was permitted to peruſe it, I diſcovered the judgment, knowledge, and ſolidity, of the author. I gave it a ſecond reading, and found new beauties and new motives for admiration, in the maſterly manner with which our unknown tragic writer paſſes through an unfortunate and ruined country, in which ſo few have ven-

tured to travel. The truth of the characters, the juſt ſucceſſion of ideas, the very natural conduct of the piece, without being common, and above all, the conſtancy with which learning is always made ſubſervient to reaſon, not reaſon to learning, as is uſual with thoſe who make amends for weakneſs of intellect, by ſtrength of memory: All theſe, without a guide, would have conducted me to the ſource of ſuch a perfect compoſition. If the divulging the *ſecret* is not to be kept a ſecret, I beg the Envoy will congratulate the moſt worthy author in my name, and confeſs to him, that I bleſs myſelf that juſtice has been done to his merits of other kinds; particularly, as it has freed me from the danger of ſo formidable a rival. I hope ſoon to confirm, in perſon, to the Envoy, my reſpectful ſentiments of gratitude, and am, &c.

Vienna, July 28, 1754.

LETTER XXII.

TO A FRIEND AT ROME.

OUR Nuncio being at Veſpers, and otherwiſe buſy in the ſacred occupations of the day, has communicated to me the letter which you have written to him, and commiſſioned me to thank you for it in his name. I do this with the more pleaſure, knowing the kindneſs which this worthy prelate has for you, and the readineſs with which, in preference to many others, he has appointed you to be his ſecretary. And as I am very anxious that you ſhould fill this office with ſatisfaction to him, and profit to yourſelf, I think it right to advertiſe you, confidentially, of ſome few particulars which it may be of importance for you to know, previous to your becoming the ſecretary of a public miniſter; which is certainly very different from that of a perſon in a private ſtation.

It ſeems neceſſary that you ſhould always carefully avoid prefaces and introductions to your letters, particularly thoſe of negociation; but, with an open frankneſs, ſhould enter di-

rectly on the buſineſs; manifeſting, even in the firſt line, that you are a perfect maſter of the ſubject, and ſuppreſſing whatever may appear ſuperfluous and epiſodical. But in being as ſhort and laconic as the nature of the buſineſs will allow, take care to omit no eſſential circumſtance; and try with the moſt natural ſimplicity to give a graceful and pleaſing turn to whatever you write. One happy expreſſion is ſufficient to enliven a whole letter. And, in your thoughts and language, you ſhould try to riſe above the common, without adopting ſuch phraſes and modes of expreſſion as are no longer in uſe. The books uſed by perſons attached to the *Corps diplomatique* ſhould merely furniſh your firſt inſtructions. You ſhould ſelect and form to yourſelf ſomething that ſeems new, without extravagance. Monſignor the Nuncio has a particular affection for men of wit and ingenuity; and I am confident, that you are ſufficiently gifted with both, to ſuit his diſpoſition in an eminent degree, as he has likewiſe a particular paſſion for the *belles lettres.*

I ſhall detain you no longer, and flatter myſelf, that you will receive theſe hints from one, who having long reſided in this diſtant country,

try, has had an opportunity of making ſuch obſervations on the miniſtry, as may intitle him to pardon from a friend like you, for the liberty he now takes.

This letter ſeems to have been addreſſed to the Abate *Taruffi*, on his being appointed by the poet's recommendation, *auditor and ſecretary of legation* to Monſignor Viſconti, the Pope's legate at the Imperial court. The Abate was Metaſtaſio's countryman, and early acquaintance. Their friendſhip continued uuninterupted till the poet's deceaſe; after which, he pronounced his Eloge at a general meeting of the academy *degli arcadi* at Rome, in Auguſt, 1782.

At the beginning of this year, Metaſtaſio received an application from Prince *Hilberghauſen*, for a copy of his *Iſola diſabitata*, written for the court of Spain; which not arriving ſo ſoon as was expected, produced a letter from the Prince, to which the following is the anſwer.

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LETTER XXIII.

TO PRINCE HILBERGHAUSEN.

My *Iſola diſabitata* (deſert Iſland) did not merit the eagerneſs which your ſerene highneſs manifeſted, to be in poſſeſſion of it; nor did my diſobedience deſerve reproof. The firſt did me too much honour, and the ſecond too much wrong. My whimſical little poem would have been long ſince at Schoffendorff, if I could have depended on any other poetical amanuenſis at Vienna than our—Or if he had not been previouſly obliged to furniſh a copy of the ſame compoſition to my moſt auguſt Patroneſs, who for what reaſon I know not, eagerly requeſted one. At length, I have procured a copy for your highneſs, which I have now the honour to ſend, accompanied with my moſt humble acknowledgements for the many favours which I have received in your enchanted palace; from the charms of which, however, as well as from the bad weather, my own impatience, and the ſolicitations of the company, I ſhould wiſh to be diſenchanted. Recommending

mending my little drama and myſelf to the benevolence of your ſerene highneſs, and your illuſtrious gueſts, I have the honour to be with the moſt profound reſpect and reverence, &c.

LETTER XXIV.

TO THE SAME.

ALL the princes of your ſerene highneſs's rank, may form themſelves upon your model, for politeneſs, and all unfortunate poets, on mine, for diſgrace. What can be imagined more gracious, generous, and obliging, than the invitation to partake of your royal delights, with which you deigned to honour me? And what more diſaſtrous, than my inability to enjoy them? The arrival of the bad weather, and the rehearſals in the reſpectable, but cold theatre of Schonbrunn, have augmented my uſual complaints, with a moſt ſolemn Catarrh, embelliſhed with its cough, chillneſs, and febrile companions; ſo that the merely tranſporting myſelf from one houſe to another, is become an heroic enterpriſe; and nothing leſs than the friendly violence and powerful influence of Count Canale can induce me to undertake it. I

ſhall

ſhall return my moſt humble thanks in perſon, as ſoon as poſſible; and in the mean time, ſhall not torture my brain in excuſing myſelf: as whoever loſes what I loſe, rather merits compaſſion than pardon. I have the honour to be with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

END OF THE SECOND SECTION.

SECTION III.

WE ſhall now return to the bard's correſpondence with his friend the CAVALIER FARINELLI..

LETTER I.

SOME weeks having elapſed ſince I had finiſhed and tranſcribed *Aleſſandro* for your court; of which, as I had given notice to Count Azlor, I did not think it neceſſary to forward it by the firſt poſt, as you did not hurry me; but having been informed yeſterday, that a courier was expected to ſet off every moment, I haſten to prepare my letter and pacquet. In the firſt place, you will find the opera of *Aleſſandro nell' Indie* ſhorter than it was before, by three hundred and ſixty-one verſes, and nine airs; but encreaſed in action, intereſt and ſpirit; particularly in the third act, which is entirely new moulded. What this curſed buſineſs has been, can only be comprehended by the genius and experience

ence of my dear Gemello, and by ſome one who has had the misfortune to write operas; but not by all. I thank you, however, for having forced me to improve a drama, which though not devoid of fire and poetry, languiſhed in the third act; but which, without the ſtimulus of pleaſing you, I ſhould never have thought worth the trouble I have taken with it. If ever there ſhould be a decent edition of my operas, I now hope, that it will diſgrace me leſs than in its former dreſs.

You will, moreover, find on a ſlip of paper, all the entrances, exits, ſtage buſineſs, and ſituations of the ſeveral characters, as I arranged them on my table in writing the opera. And this trouble is extremely uſeful for the performance of ſome dramas, particularly *Aleſſandro*. If no embarraſſment happens, you need not look at this paper; but if intricacy occurs, it will ſave you the trouble of thinking.

If Sig. *Quaglia*, an architect of great experience in this theatre of Vienna, and my friend, ſhall have had time to favour me with them, you will find in the ſame parcel, three ſketches, rather than deſigns, of thoſe long ſcenes in which the ſituations are difficult to delineate. I begged this favour of

him, not with the leaſt deſign of limiting or reſtraining your ideas, or thoſe of your able ſubaltern; but becauſe I hoped, by this means, better to explain what would be wanting in the reſpective ſcenes, that the action may be clear, decorous, and apparent. The laſt ſcene of the third act, for example, would entirely languiſh, if the architect did not contrive a decorous and probable ſkreen on the right hand ſide, near the orcheſtra, to conceal *Porus* and *Gandarte* from all the other actors, and yet leave them viſible to the ſpectators. I have imagined for this purpoſe, the temple to be wholly adorned with very rich carpets, hanging from the architraves, pilaſtres, and columns: and that one of theſe carpets, ſeparating *Porus* and *Gandarte* from the other performers, ſhall leave them viſible to the ſpectators. So that theſe deſigns may ſerve to vindicate my wiſh, but not to furniſh ideas or inventions for the ſcene.

If, however, as I begin to fear, theſe ſketches are not ready for the pacquet, they ſhall be ſent after it, as ſoon as Sig. Quaglia ſhall favour me with them. My eagerneſs will, I hope, be excuſed, as I flatter myſelf, that my dear Gemello has no occaſion

for

for new proofs of my ſincere deſire to be uſeful to him.

I am threatened with a new opera for our court. The worſt of it is, that there is no proper preparation for it. The making a dreſs without knowing who is to wear it, is the buſineſs of a Jew: I do not know, nor ought I abſolutely to make it. We have no ſingers in the ſervice of the court, no one at leaſt upon whom we can venture to found a character. And thoſe which can be had from other countries, however ordinary their talents, ought to be engaged ſome years before they are wanted. Hence it becomes neceſſary to have the foreſight of my dear Gemello, who does not poſtpone making his cloak, till it begins to rain. Such care of the future, is not a drug of this country. So that there will be no opera, or it will be got up in haſte, and for ſuch performers as have been rejected by other theatres: and then, either it will be impoſſible to write a new opera, or it muſt be done in ſuch haſte, as, among us poor mortals, precludes all good: *fiat lux, et facta eſt*, is only reſerved for omnipotence.

By a letter from Sig. Ridolfi of the end of December, I learn that your health

had ſuffered conſiderably at your return to the Eſcurial, and that it was not yet quite re-eſtabliſhed. This afflicted me, as every thing you ſuffer ought to afflict me. But my dear Gemello, forgive my affection the liberty of ſaying, that according to the accounts I have received, you have been a little to blame for this indiſpoſition. They tell me, that your zeal and impatience, when you wiſh to ſerve your ſovereigns in proportion to the favours which you have received from them, make you forget yourſelf, and that you have no reſt, either in mind or body, day or night. This character is worthy of you; but it would likewiſe be worthy of you to reflect, that if you deſtroy yourſelf, you can no longer ſerve them. And that your firſt duty is to preſerve for ſuch Patrons, a ſervant whoſe loſs would not only be ſenſibly felt, but irreparable.

My own health is what it has long been: full of flatulencies, acidities, tenſion of every honeſt nerve, and profound hypochondria; but with a countenance which rather merits envy than compaſſion. Patience is the beſt ſpecific which I have yet found; I lay in a good ſtock of it, and yet it often fails me: but

but that ſincere and conſtant affection which makes me always yours, will never fail me.

Vienna, February 4, 1754.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

THE patience of Sig. Azlor, in waiting for an occaſion to diſpatch a courier in order to forward *Aleſſandro* to you, is truly heroic. But mine is not quite ſo ſublime. It is too great a trial for it, after having uſed every effort poſſible to oblige a friend, to have the deſign fruſtrated by negligence. I therefore ſend you my *Aleſſandro nell' Indie* by the poſt; circumciſed, and trimmed to your taſte, and my own—What will be the conſequence of my impatience? My verſes are not affairs of ſtate; and though the curioſity of others may have ſome pleaſure in peruſing them, they will neither be rendered better nor worſe by this hurry. To wait for a courier during ſolicitude, would be prudent; but waiting with tranquillity while my diligence is rendered uſeleſs, and your wiſhes remain ungratified, is paying too great reſpect to œconomy. My impatience may perhaps

ariſe from poetical vivacity; but between us twins, there ſhould be a reciprocation of indulgence, and I have no doubt but I ſhall be forgiven. My friend *Sig. Quaglia*, who promiſed me deſigns, has not yet brought them, and I ſhall not wait for them. I told you in a former letter, that I did not depend on him for the ideas, which either you or your aſſiſtants may want; it is ſufficient that I have pointed out to you the places where I imagined, while I was writing, the principal buſineſs and ſituations that might be aſſiſted by ſcenery. Theſe clearly known, it will remain with you to avail yourſelf of my expedients, or thoſe of others, at your pleaſure. As ſoon as this good man, who is really hurried to the laſt degree, by the two theatres here, and by a thouſand whims of the court, ſhall be able to oblige me, you ſhall have his ſketches, and make what uſe of them you pleaſe.

I am extremely anxious to receive ſome news of your health: particularly, as the laſt I received from *Sig. Ridolfi* was by no means what my tender affection wiſhed. Take care of yourſelf, my dear friend, for your own ſake, for mine, and for the admiration of all good men. Examples of moderation,

in circumſtances ſuch as yours, are ſo rare, that your preſervation becomes a common concern. Adieu. Command me, and never be weary of loving me.

Vienna, February 23, 1754.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

You complain, my dear Gemello, of not hearing from me, and yet to three letters that I have written to you, I have received but one anſwer. Your ſilence occaſioned mine, after the account of your indiſpoſition from Sig. Ridolfi, and the ſuppoſition, that you were very buſy in preparing for your feſtal ſolemnity; ſo that inſtead of accuſing me, you ſhould thank me for my diſcretion.

I became a ſtone, but not a precious one, when I ſaw the magnificent preſent of an enamelled watch, and a pocket-book ſo richly and elegantly bound, come from the Imperial cuſtom-houſe. What can I ſay to you, who are ſo much more abundant in gifts than I in words? The thing ſpeaks for itſelf, and I, in order to manifeſt my gratitude, will endeavour to make the world

do juſtice to the munificence of that hand, which is never tired of diſpenſing favours.

You are truly a Sea monſter. What! can the Goddeſs of Manzanare condeſcend even to remember ſuch a being as me; and to recommend to you the taſk of adviſing me *to make uſe of the pocket-book in writing down my thoughts for the opera which you have ſo long requeſted from me?* And you, like a true friend, have not inſtantly taken my part? Did not you deſcribe, as I have to you a thouſand times, the irregular ſtate of my health? as an indubitable proof of this truth, did you not ſay that my moſt auguſt Patroneſs, in order to ſpare my poor tormented head any new labour, had conſented to let the old opera of *Tito* be brought out laſt year! and have you ſuffered me to appear either guilty of lazineſs or ingratitude? And this you call friendſhip? Twinſhip? Chriſtian charity? And yet I am not to call you a Marine monſter? But I will vindicate myſelf, if I die for it. Freed as I am at preſent from arranging any little compoſitions for my Patroneſs, I ſhall neither let ſoul nor body reſt, till I have choſen a ſubject for this bleſſed opera, which like a true Swiſs, you are abſolutely determined to wreſt from my hands;

hands; and if it ſhould ſavour of the flatulencies, torments, tenſion of nerves, and of all the other agreeable qualities of the hypochondriac writer, it will be your own fault. I am, however, ſtill able to draw up a manifeſto in verſe, to ſet it to muſic, and publiſh it in all the newſpapers of the four quarters of the world. You laugh? but there is no cauſe for laughter. An angry poet is even more to be feared, than a Sea monſter. Pray for my health and favour with the muſes; and that after ſo many years of matrimony, they would have the ſame complacence for me, as when they firſt courted my acquaintance.

The contuſion in your leg puts me in a paſſion. Pray favour it, my dear Gemello, I know you well. Your zeal to ſerve others, makes you neglect yourſelf; and I fear that you do not take that care of it which you ought. Remember that a uſeful and grateful ſervant merits preſervation; and that you fulfil the moſt conſiderable of your duties, in endeavouring to be long uſeful to your beneficent ſovereigns.

What did you expect from *Mingotti?* Do you begin only now to know the groteſque character of our tragi-comic Sirens? I wonder

more at your wonder, than at her conduct. She has done what ſhe ought to do, *ſecundum ordinam* of ſingers: and you flattered yourſelf with that hope which it was unreaſonable for you to form, if you expected her to be prudent. Give her your holy benediction, and let her run after repentance (*m*).

You who have had long experience, and are preſent, can beſt tell whether it will be expedient to chuſe the *Eroe Cineſe* for next September. The whole opera depends on the part of *Leanzo*; hence, whoever repreſents it, ſhould not have his hands in his pockets. I am unable to preſcribe any cure for its brevity, as you have no dancers; but I ſhall rely on the reſources of my twin. I have read the piece by the Abate *Antonio della Mirandola*, and find it very happily verſified: I thank you for thinking of ſending it to me.

I wiſh your Italian Emiſſary, *Marcheſini*, good ſport; but according to the accounts which I have received, there is not much

(*m*) It was to come to England, that this excellent performer quitted Spain ſooner than Farinelli wiſhed. Her firſt appearance on our ſtage was in the opera of *Ipermeſtra*, written by Metaſtaſio, and ſet by Haſſe, in the Autumn of 1754.

choice,

choice. The *Mattei* has lately performed at Reggio: but from the advices ſent hither, not with her uſual ſucceſs. Beauties have their day, and applauſe does not make them better. Whether ſhe has advanced or retreated ſince I heard her, I am unable to ſay. I entreat you to thank *Monſignor Migazzi*, and the Duke *di Santa Elizabetta*, in m name, for the honour of their remembrance, and to aſſure them of my conſtant reſpect. Oh that I could make a fourth with you! But theſe are *pia deſideria*.

Adieu, my dear Swiſs Twin, my Sea monſter!

Vienna, June 8, 1754.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

I RECEIVED your very dear letter, which found me engaged with the muſes, in compliance with your wiſhes, notwithſtanding all the infernal regions ſeem to have conſpired in diſturbing me. I have a whole volume of inſtructions to draw up for the printer of a new edition of my works at Paris. I ought to new write a whole opera:

to

to accommodate three feſtive dramas for *Schloſſtroff*, whither the court goes at its return from Bohemia: to write and make additions to ſongs and choruſes for the ſame occaſion: to furniſh an idea, in writing, for a German comedy to be repreſented before their majeſties in the military college of *Neuſtadt*; and, moreover, have been obliged to invent and draw out at full length, the idea of a magnificent picture, which my moſt auguſt miſtreſs has ordered to be painted for the ceiling of the great hall of this univerſity, that is now building at her expence. What does my dear Sea monſter ſay to all this (*n*)? Do you think I am furniſhed with a ſufficient doſe of buſineſs? Have patience. With all this, I have advanced a good way in the firſt act, and am not diſatisfied with what I have hitherto been able to write. If

(*n*) The appellations of *Gemello*, *Moſtro Marino*, and *Svizzero*, beſtowed by Metaſtaſio on his friend Farinelli, in pleaſantry, may want explanation. Why he called him *Twin* (Gemello) has already been explained. *Sea monſter*, *Moſtro Marino*, doubtleſs alluded to his birth on the Seaſhore at Naples, and his voice and profeſſional abilities exceeding the common limits of humanity. And laſtly, by *Svizzero* (Swiſs) added to Twin, Metaſtaſio meant to compare Farinelli and himſelf to Swiſs troops, who quit their own country to enter into foreign ſervice.

affection

affection can do any thing, you will likewiſe be contented. It is impoſſible to lengthen my letter. If you will have me work, you muſt allow me to be quiet; and if health does not fail me, I ſhall certainly get on.

I ſhould write a ſeparate letter to Sig. Ridolfi, but I hope, that at your interceſſion, he will generouſly remit the formality of two covers, and receive theſe thanks and ſalutations with the ſame cordiality as if they were conveyed in a different letter. I therefore thank, reverence, and embrace him always: wiſhing for the faculty of being uſeful to him. Do you my dear and admirable Swiſs, love me, bear with my infirmities, command, and believe me, &c.

Vienna, Auguſt 17, 1754.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

My ſincere eagerneſs to comply with the wiſhes of my moſt amiable Swiſs, has made me work with ſuch a good will, that yeſterday I finiſhed the ſecond act of the promiſed opera: and if my dear Sea monſter wiſhes for grandeur of exhibition, and energy of tenderneſs,

tenderneſs, I have reaſon to hope that he will find himſelf rewarded for the patience which my abominable impediments have obliged him to exerciſe, in bearing with my involuntary delays. At preſent, I muſt confeſs, that I find myſelf in want of repoſe. I have written two acts without taking breath, and without reſt, the third would ſuffer.

It now happens, that the prince of *Hilberghauſen*, who expects their Imperial majeſties on a viſit at *Schoſſtroff*, his country ſeat, the 23d inſtant, thinks he ſhall want me to ſay grace to the magnificent entertainments preparing on this occaſion, and ſolicits me with the obſtinacy of a Swiſs, to be of the party. Indeed the ſervice of my ſovereigns is in queſtion, though indirectly, as well as the pleaſing a prince to whom I am indebted for a thouſand diſtinctions: ſo that as I ſhall at the ſame time enjoy the neceſſary reſt from my poetical labours, I have reſolved to pay my duty to my patrons, and the prince, in the country next Tueſday, and afterwards to make a viſit to the Counteſs of *Althan* in Moravia; whom I did not follow this year, that I might devote myſelf wholly to your ſervice; and at my return, repoſed and refitted,

ſited, give to our opera the termination and laſt poliſh. So that I may ſay, that my dear Gemello is already obeyed; as what remains of the labour, is already included in what is done, like the chicken in the egg, which only wants to be ſate upon.

I know not whether you have ever heard of a Neapolitan compoſer called *Cocchi:* I have ſeen an opera ſet by him, my *Semiramide*, which pleaſed me much. Pray take notice, that though I recommend him, he neither knows me, nor I him, and no one has ſpoken to me in his favour; but I was ſo ſtruck with the brevity, fire, expreſſion, and judgment, manifeſted in his *Semiramis*, that I ſhould not wiſh for better muſic to my new opera. I repeat it, that I have not the leaſt view in praiſing him; and only ſpeak with that candid abundance of heart, which I naturally uſe to all, but particularly to my dear Gemello.

What I beg of you moſt earneſtly is, to inſiſt in the moſt peremptory manner, that whoever has the opera to ſet, ſhall keep it a great ſecret, and on no account ſuffer a copy to be taken. The hungry printers, greedy of the ſmalleſt gain, are always on the watch in Italy; and you may perhaps have the

amuſe-

amuſement of ſeeing it in print, before it is performed. I have ſometimes ſuffered through the fault of my patrons themſelves, who having had copies of ſome of my pieces for peruſal previous to performance, and from partiality to the author, ſuffering them to be read by others, without knowing how, they have got into print before the proper time. As I ſhall not ſpeak of this new compoſition at court, to avoid all riſk, and ſhall be particularly careful on my ſide, I hope you will be ſo on yours. Perhaps you will tell me, that the inconvenience would not be great, as the opera will always be new when it is repreſented, and muſt be known to have been written expreſsly for you; yet this manner of reaſoning does not ſatisfy my delicacy.

And now, my dear Swiſs, adieu. The muſes have kept me a priſoner in my den; and, at preſent, propriety requires that I ſhould ſee ſome particular perſons, previous to my leaving the city. I ſhall therefore diſpatch a liſt of viſits, and away.

Frain, Sept. 7, 1754.

A letter written about this time to Sig. *Franceſco Ridolfi* at Madrid, who ſeems to have

have been Farinelli's friend and aſſiſtant in the opera regency at the court of Spain, would hardly be worth tranſlating, but for the intelligence it contains relative to muſical tranſactions. The ſlighteſt letters of Metaſtaſio, in the original, have an elegance of diction, and felicity of expreſſion, that incline me to think them of more importance, than I am able to prove in my own language.

LETTER VI.

TO SIG. F. RIDOLFI.

I RECEIVE your moſt obliging letter in the foreſts of Moravia, where I intend to ſpend the remainder of the autumn in the company of the Counteſs d'Althan, the general her ſon, and many noble gueſts of both ſexes; and where I hope for a little reſpite from thoſe diabolical hypochondriac complaints which ſo much afflict me. Your moſt welcome letter found me ſtruggling with a catarrh and feverette, for which I receive compliments, as a ſalutary thing; but I am more inclined to grumble and be ungrateful,

than to thank my friends for their felicitations. To-day it has not viſited me, and I begin to hope that it has taken leave. I am extremely afflicted at the perſecutions which my dear Gemello ſuffers in his ſtomach: embrace him tenderly, in my name, I entreat you; and aſſure him, that I feel all his ſufferings in my ſoul, aggravated by the anxiety incident to a long and ſincere friendſhip, which has too much time to torment itſelf in the intervals between letter and letter, at ſuch an enormous diſtance.

I rejoice that he has at length received the deſigns for *Aleſſandro*. Pray remind him, that theſe are not meant to cramp the invention of his own architects; but merely to explain the ſituations, and to leave the invention of ſcenes to their pleaſure.

In the firſt week of next month, I ſhall return to Vienna in order to intrench myſelf againſt the cold of winter, and to put the laſt hand to the opera which I have promiſed my Swiſs Twin; who has had the art of forcing me, in ſpite of all my complaints, to break my firm reſolution not to teaze the Muſes. But who can reſiſt a dear ſea [illegible] ſter, diſguiſed like a Swiſs.

I am unacquainted with the merit of the *Parigi*,

Parigi, but I hear a very good account both of her figure, and abilities. The *Ghiringhella*, who has been much approved here in men's parts, is a graceful young perſon, with whom I hope you will be pleaſed.

I entreat you, once more, to embrace my dear Gemello affectionately, and believe me to be with the moſt perfect eſteem and friendſhip.

Frain in Moravia, Sept. 27, 1754.

The firſt letter of the year 1755, which ſeems to have been preſerved, is addreſſed,

LETTER VII.

TO THE ABATE PASQUINI.

YOUR letter of the 20th of laſt month, which I received yeſterday evening, has been a painful companion to me all night, and is ſtill obſtinately fixed in my mind. The dreadful danger of loſing the moſt excellent organ of the ſoul, puts you in ſo pitable a ſtate, that it drives every idea from my mind, which I ought to recollect for your conſola-

tion. My dear Paſquini! what can I poſſibly ſuggeſt to you? You know as well as any one, all the aſſiſtance that reaſon and rhetoric can adminiſter in ſimilar caſes; and it would be a tireſome piece of pedantry, to attempt ringing them in your ears. Religion and philoſophy are the moſt uſeful companions, during ſuch tempeſts: hope firmly, or heroically relinquiſh that remedy: there is no drug more poiſonous than feeble hope. It is indiſputable, that our burthens are rendered more light, or more heavy, in proportion to its fervor. An enormous weight does not oppreſs us, if well placed on the ſhoulders, though an inconſiderable one becomes inſupportable, if awkwardly carried. I conſole myſelf in my miſeries, which though not to be compared with yours, are conſiderable, by reflecting, that I am not always to be confined to this troubleſome and dirty Inn; that there is an infinite number of mortals more wretched than myſelf: and that providence puts our misfortunes on a level, by our virtue. Be aſſured, my dear friend, that you will either ſoon ſee the firſt diminiſhed, or feel the ſecond encreaſed. If you can poſſibly conceive how much I ſuffer in being able to afford you no better conſolation

than

than words, you will return me part of that compaſſion which is ſo juſtly due to your ſituation from my friendſhip. Adieu, my dear friend. Let me ſoon rejoice in your recovery, or admire your fortitude—at leaſt, ſpare me, if poſſible, the painful office of pitying you.

Vienna, Feb. 3, 1755.

LETTER VIII.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

THANKS, my dear friend, for the acquiſition of the moſt worthy count *Aleſſandro Bogino's* partiality, which your kindneſs has procured me. The picture which you have drawn of him, no leſs than his ſonnets, tell me how much you muſt be delighted with this uncommon aſſemblage of ſo many enviable qualities. Aſſure him of my devout acknowledgments; offer him my ſincere ſervices; tell him, that from the gay flowers which his happy genius has already produced, I judge of the excellence of the fruit which will follow; and tell him not to ſuffer the ſmalleſt weed or error to take root in ſo no-

ble a ſoil, unleſs it be that which ſeduces him to honour me with his friendſhip.

La Corona is a compoſition, which, in fortune, has far exceeded my hopes. It is not for my intereſt to examine the merit of it; and if it ſhould be ſtill of leſs value than it ſeems, I ought, at leaſt, to be grateful for the diſcovery of ſo conſiderable a number of friends.

Adieu. Salute, in my name, the venerable Prieſtleſs; embrace the whole ſacred and profane moſt flouriſhing family; love me, take care of yourſelf, and believe me to be, &c.

In his correſpondence with his Roman friend, Argenvilliers, this year, Metaſtaſio was provoked to attempt a long period in Spaniſh, in anſwer to one that he had received from that Gentleman. At the end of his labour he exclaims:

LETTER IX.

Oh what a terrible fatigue! I am in a violent perſpiration from head to foot. I hope

hope you will never attempt to put me to ſuch another trial. I have never written or ſpoken Spaniſh: and the chief part of the many books that I have read, have been poets; ſo that my proſe muſt be much infected by the fantaſticalneſs of Parnaſſus. But I ſhall ſay no more, as my riſk with ſuch a friend as you, is not very great. For if my rhetoric ſhould make you laugh, I am certain that you will have the charity to laugh alone.

I hope you will neither rejoice nor grieve much, concerning the choice of dramas for this theatre. The ſingers of the preſent times wholly forget, that their buſineſs is to imitate the ſpeech of men, with numbers and harmony: on the contrary, they believe themſelves more perfect, in proportion as their performance is remote from human nature. Their models are Nightingales, Flageolets, Crickets, and Graſshoppers; not the perſonages they repreſent, or their affections. When they have played their Symphony with the throat, they believe they have fulfilled all the duties of their art. Hence the audience keep their hearts in the moſt perfect tranquillity, and expect the performers merely to tickle their ears.

For this purpoſe, there is no occaſion for good dramas; on the contrary, I ſhould wiſh that, not only words were baniſhed from our theatres, but the whole alphabet, except a pair of vowels *(o)*.

Vienna, y Agoſto a 28, di 1755.

LETTER X.

TO THE SAME.

I AM obliged to teaze you to day, my dear friend, from neceſſity. But among your other virtues, as you are poſſeſſed of a large portion of patience, there is perhaps no harm in my putting you in the way how to make uſe of it. Having a ſmall capital at Naples of 900 Ducati, and there being at Rome a

(o) If Metaſtaſio were now living, he might have ſaid, "except a *ſingle* vowel." In his time, diviſions were frequently given to the vowel O; but at preſent, Italian compoſers aſſign them only to A; on which more labour is beſtowed by the Maeſtro, and attention by the audience, than on all the poetry and ſentiments of the ſingers. If forty years ago, Metaſtaſio ſpeaks with ſo much indignation of the abuſe of execution, which has been increaſing ever ſince, what would he ſay now?

ſmall

ſmall ſum unoccupied in your hands, as a good father of a family, it ſeems my duty not to let this money be idle. In Rome it will produce little more than three per cent, and here it is eaſy to get five: ſo that I have determined on the moſt profitable bargain. I hope, my dear friend, that you will approve my reſolution, and excuſe, with your uſual partiality, this new trouble. Such inconveniences, are unavoidable taxes on thoſe excellent qualities of heart and mind, with which you are endowed. Adieu.

Vienna, September 8, 1755.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

HURRIED away by the torrent of letters, which have been accumulated, during three weeks abſence in the country, I muſt anſwer in the greateſt haſte your two admirable letters of the 13th and 27th of laſt month, which are this moment arrived together.

If my Spaniſh letter does not abound with grammatical errors, I ſhall be very proud, and am obliged to you for diſcovering in me a faculty of which I was ignorant. Find out

ſome

ſome other, I beſeech you: as you have ſo excellent a knack at inveſtigation.

The reſt of Metaſtaſio's letters to this correſpondent during 1755, having been written merely on ſubjects of buſineſs, offer nothing but what may have flowed from an inferior pen. We ſhall therefore reſume his more intereſting, and conſtant correſpondence, with his friend, the Cavalier CARLO BROSCHI, better known by the name of FARINELLI.

LETTER XII.

I NEVER, my moſt dear Gemello, wanted the aſſiſtance of a true friend like you, ſo much as at this moment: and you, without knowing my diſtreſs, have beſtowed that aſſiſtance in your laſt moſt affectionate letter, by your kind expreſſions with which I conſole myſelf, in imagining that I ſhall not remain in a deſert after the unexpected, afflicting, and eternal loſs, which we have ſuſtained of our moſt worthy Counteſs d'Althan! A Rheumatic inflammatory fever, cancelled her from the number of the living, in ſix days, at 11 o'clock at night, on the

firſt

firſt of this month. She died as ſhe lived, that is, heroically fulfilling, with ſerene fortitude, all the offices of a chriſtian and a mother. There is no one that does not feel her loſs moſt ſenſibly, and admire and extol her virtue, from our auguſt Sovereigns, to the loweſt order of the people: circumſtances, my dear friend, which in ſome degree afford me conſolation; but do not reſtore Her! A friendſhip of more than four and twenty years, free from remorſe, are ties which cannot be broken without a cruel ſhock. You are involved in this calamity, for you have loſt a good and true friend.

I am obliged to you for the reception which Sig. *Bonechi* has obtained from you on my account, and am proud of the obliging zeal which the Archbiſhop, *Monſignor Migazzi*, has manifeſted in favour of our poet. He is a man of genius and knows the world. This laſt quality inclined me to recommend him to you, even more than his rank in Parnaſſus. And now he has been the means of proving the extent of your kindneſs for me, I love him better than ever.

Thirty-five days have elapſed ſince the departure of my packet, ſo that I now ſuppoſe my new opera is in your hands. I per-

ceive that it was not arrived when your laſt letter was written, and hope that no accident or indiſpoſition of the moſt obliging bearer, has occaſioned its travelling ſo ſlow. The weather has been ſo horrible, that it is natural to throw all the blame upon that. If he ſhould have reached Madrid when this arrives, I beg you to preſent my reſpects, and to aſſure him of my perfect eſteem and gratitude.

Pray endeavour, by every means poſſible, to perſuade our moſt venerable prelate, *Migazzi*, to continue his generous partiality for me, of which I am ſo jealous and ſo proud. Reverence him devoutly in my name, and procure me a little of his affection. Adieu, dear Gemello: take care of yourſelf, if you wiſh well to your, &c.

Vienna, March 12, 1755.

LETTER XIII.

TO THE SAME.

I BEGAN to fear that my *Nitteti* was aſhamed to appear at the court of Madrid, and that retreating into ſome hermitage on the way, ſhe had reſolved to paſs a ſolitary life.

life. I quitted Vienna the 20th inſtant, without knowing what was become of her. You ſee plainly, that after a ſuſpenſe of five months, I had reaſon to be uneaſy. Thank Heaven, ſhe has at length found the road; and now enjoys, near you, the convenient and delicious abode, which as a fond father, I had foreſeen would be granted to her, for your ſake; whoſe kindneſs was likely to ſupply the defects of ſuch merit as ſhe had been able to draw from the exhauſted treaſury of her ſire.

Regard her as a little niece of a good diſpoſition, and ſhew her off to ſuch advantage, that ſhe may at leaſt *ſeem* beautiful. The clemency with which ſhe has been received by your benignant ſovereigns, comforts, but does not ſurpriſe, me. This is not the firſt time that my fortunate productions have experienced their goodneſs. They have been long accuſtomed to the moſt illuſtrious premiums, merely for my obedience, which has generally been preceded by benefits.

I am very much obliged to you for your affectionate condolence, and the conſolation which you have endeavoured to adminiſter for the irreparable loſs which we have both ſuſtained, of a worthy and perfect friend; but

but I muſt confeſs, that my mind has not yet recovered its former tranquillity. Nor to accompliſh this, my dear Gemello, do I know whether I ſhould become more wiſe or more fooliſh. But I am certain, that I muſt be very different from what I am at preſent. What I am unable to do for myſelf, time and neceſſity, the harſh, but certain maſters of our miſerable feelings, will do for me.

For heaven's ſake, give me a better account of your own health. It ſeems as if your headachs, and relaxed ſtomach, had a ſecret correſpondence with my obſtinate and moſt uncivil nervous affections: and if I could once hear of your good health, I ſhould have great hopes of mine. Like true Twins, we ſufficiently reſemble each other in our ſufferings; it is time we ſhould begin to be ſimilar in happineſs.

Say a thouſand reſpectful and affectionate things for me to our moſt worthy *Monſignor Migazzi.* Why, alas! am not I allowed ſometimes to make a third in your confabulations! Be aſſured, however, that I very frequently enjoy that happineſs, mentally.

I long for the arrival of Count Torrepalma, and ſhall avail myſelf of the prejudices

in

in my favour with which you have poſſeſſed him. Adieu, my dear Gemello, I am and ever ſhall be, &c.

Vienna, May 24, 1755.

With his opera of *Nitteti*, Metaſtaſio ſent the following Sonnet.

Al Cavaliere

D. CARLO BROSCHI

FARINELLI.

L'Autore di Nitteti.

SONETTO.

Queſta nata pur or quì preſſo al polo
Mia prole, ch'io conſacro al ſoglio Ibero,
Raccogli, o CARLO, *ed a proſtrarſi al ſuolo*
Le inſegna, oſpite, amico, a condottiero.

Penſa, che il ſuo deſtin fido a te ſolo,
Che ſei dell'opra eccitator primiero;
E che appreſer gemelli a ſciorre il volo,
La tua voce in Parnaſo e il mio penſiero.

Penſa, che quando Te l'Italia oſtenta
P.r onor dell' Armonica famiglia,
L'orno de' Carmi un tuo dover diventa:

E ſe queſto dover non ti conſiglia,
Grato l'amor del padre al men rammenta;
E del padre l'amor rendi alla figlia.

Sonnet

Sonnet to FARINELLI.

Addreſſed to him from Vienna, with the opera of *Nitteti*, written at his requeſt, and to be performed under his direction, at the court of Madrid.

My offspring deſtin'd for the Iberian ſhore
Protect, Oh Charles! though foſter'd near the pole;
Teach her, when proſtrate, favour to implore
With all the ardor of thy friendly ſoul.

Remember that on Thee ſhe calls for aid,
Whoſe kind ſuggeſtions drew her into light,
And that my Muſe and thy ſweet voice eſſay'd
Like Twins, in youth, to ſcale Parnaſſus' height.

When o'er her tuneful ſons of high renown,
Italia gave the ſov'reignty to thee,
It then became the duty of thy crown
To aid the ſiſter art of Poeſy.

But if this duty no ſuch counſel give,
Thy boſom let an old affection fire;
And let the helpleſs child that love receive,
Which has ſo long been laviſhed on her Sire.

LETTER XIV.

TO THE SAME.

OH how numerous, and how different, are the ſenſations, my dear Gemello, which

your letter of the 10th of September has excited! Love, tenderneſs, confuſion, gratitude, terror, wonder, and a thouſand others which are felt, but cannot be deſcribed. I have experienced at the bottom of my ſoul, the moſt violent affliction for the deſtruction of the unhappy Liſbon. What horror! What a ſcourge! What miſery! Poor humanity!—Yet among all theſe motives of terror and ſorrow, the ample field which providence has opened to your benevolent ſovereign, for exerciſing the great and admirable qualities of his heart, affords me ſome conſolation. What he has done, and is ſtill doing, on this dreadful occaſion, would appear nothing but poetical inventions, if aſcribed to my *Titus* or *Alexander* Theſe are actions, my dear Gemello, which do honour to human nature. Happy the mortal deſtined by Heaven, to be the inſtrument of ſuch glory to all our ſpecies.

And among ſuch tragical events, have your admirable ſovereigns deigned to lend an ear to the humble ſentiments of my grateful ſubmiſſion? Oh matchleſs clemency; unexampled benignity! and has my diſcretion been commended for being ſatisfied with their profuſe beneficence! Ah, my dear

Gemello, if mine has been diſcretion, I defy your great monarchs, with all their power, to find an indiſcreet perſon among mortals.

I venerate the juſt reſolution of your pious ſovereign, to ſuſpend the celebration of the intended feſtival. The thought is well worthy of the mind which produced it. When heaven ſhall be appeaſed, and mental tranquillity reſtored, give what directions you pleaſe for the decorations of the new drama. It cannot be in hands more friendly, or more expert, than your own.

Whether Egypt appears in a car, or on an elephant, I know that you will be attentive to his dignity, and careful that the repreſentation ſhall be furniſhed with all the barbarous pomp with which my head was filled, while this drama was writing.

Before I finiſh, let me make a confeſſion to you. I have been a long while liberal of ſnuff at your expence. All the dilettanti nobility, pay their court to me on your account, and my ſnuff has uſurped your name. Many have ſent commiſſions to Madrid, for ſome of the ſame kind, but none have ſucceeded. Stimulated, not only by my indiſcreet noſe, but by vanity, I was on the point of begging your charity, before I was quite

a bankrupt, when your laſt magnificient and elegant preſent arrived. This oppreſſed me to ſuch a degree, that I loſt all courage to torment you again, as it appeared to me, an unpardonable inſatiability to have any want remaining, after ſuch exceſſive remuneration. During this time, the Marquis Paul came to viſit me, in order to expreſs his infinite gratitude, for the favours which you have conferred on his brother. I proudly diſplayed to him the preſent I had received, and hiſtorically related my diſtreſs, in being unable to muſter ſufficient courage to apply to you for ammunition for my noſe, and the noſes of others. He then only laughed; but, when I met him a few days after, he confeſſed to me, that he had written my whole melancholy ſtory to his brother. I bluſhed at this information, and ſcolded; but to own the truth, (as twins ſhould always do to each other) when the firſt tranſport of my wrath was over, I did not feel much injured. Your royal Patrons call me diſcreet. Ah, for charity's ſake, my dear Gemello, let me enjoy their good opinion, and conceal this trait in the hiſtory of my life.

Adieu. It is late. Love me as uſual,

and be aſſured of the perfect and inviolable ſympathy of your moſt faithful Gemello.

Vienna, December 5, 1755.

LETTER XV.

TO MONSIGNOR SABATINI, BISHOP OF MODENA.

THE moſt learned, though partial judgment, which you have pronounced, moſt illuſtrious and reverend Sir, on my fortunate little verſes, and which has been exactly communicated to me by our dear cavalier *Montecuccoli*, demands my warmeſt gratitude. This opinion, which has more weight than that of a whole public, can never have been given with a view to excite and foment my vanity, by one deſtined and formed by providence to correct the frailties of others. Your reverence muſt therefore have imagined me gifted with a modeſty, and moderation, ſufficient to reſiſt a ſhock which would have have annihilated all the fanatical ſolciſm of the proud family of Zeno. I confeſs myſelf flattered by the credit which you have given me on this occaſion; and hope

hope to enjoy it without the remorſe of undeceiving you. I can never, without the greateſt ingratitude, forget, not only the generous friendſhip, but paternal affection, with which your reverence has deſigned to honour me. I am that

——Strabonem
Appellat pætum pater, et pullum, male parvus
Si tui filius eſt.

HOR. Sat. Lib. 1. 3. 44.

Nor ſhould we to their faults be more ſevere,
Than an indulgent father to his heir,
If with diſtorted eyes the urchin glares,
"Oh, the dear boy, how prettily he ſtares!"
Is he of dwarfiſh and abortive ſize?
"Sweet little moppet," the fond father cries.

FRANCIS.

So that I do not eſtimate my poetical merit by your favourable judgment, but by your affection, which cannot be a mediator in degrading your equal: an honour, of which I am more ambitious, than of the laurels of Homer. Among all the favours which you heap upon me, I beg your Lordſhip to grant me this, of regarding you as a brother poet, without diminiſhing the juſt veneration due to your other ſuperior qualities.

The learning and method with which your Lordſhip has analyſed my Epigram,

has not ſurpriſed me. It is done as I ought to have expected it would be, by one who unites the theory of a maſter, with the practice of a workman. The novelty and vivacity of your thoughts and ſtyle have delighted me, as emanations of a mind fraught with all that ſolid information, and original genius, which have ſo long excited the reſpect and veneration of, &c.

Vienna, January 11, 1756.

In writing to his friend, Sig. Argenvilliers, at Rome, the beginning of this year, he ſays: "I am very curious to know what reception the muſic of our GLUCK will meet with at Rome. He compoſes with peculiar ſpirit: and according to the preſent taſte, which is ſaid to reign in that city, I ſhould imagine that he would give ſatisfaction." April the 5th, he ſays:

"We have ſtill here as deep a ſnow, and as cold a North wind, as we have been afflicted with during the whole winter; ſo that little hope remains of our enjoying ſpring this year: a ſeaſon which very often gives way in this climate to its companions. Do you, my dear friend, enjoy in my ſtead, the

the ſmiling days of your warm ſky, while I remain ſuffocated by the ſtoves of this country."

In another letter, which ſeems an anſwer to one which gave an account of the extraordinary ſucceſs of his dramas at Rome, he ſays: "The partiality of my native city for my productions, is a very equivocal proof of their merit. The being inſenſible to the defects of our children, is a weakneſs ſo much the more pardonable, as it is common to all mothers: ſo that if her blind approbation cannot ſerve as a foundation to my vanity, it merits, at leaſt, that filial tenderneſs which I ſincerely feel for her."

The explanation of a paſſage in one of his letters to his Roman correſpondent which had alarmed him concerning a young man whom he had recommended to the notice of our poet, is pleaſant.

Your letter of the 6th of June, made me laugh at the unexpected agitation into which you were thrown on account of Sig. *Niccolino Paveſe*. He had been to viſit me four or five times; and, notwithſtanding I had entreated him to favour me with his commands, I never was able to get a word from him, by which I could diſcover his wants.

So that concluding there was nothing in which I could ſerve him, I made uſe, in writing to you, of the following expreſſion: *his wants muſt be impalpable*, that is, cannot be felt, have no exiſtence. Indeed it appears to me, that the young man has judgment, talents, and, according to his account, that he has acquired by his reſidence in Vienna, all the uſeful knowledge which an experienced and wiſe merchant would wiſh to poſſeſs. Therefore make yourſelf eaſy, my dear friend; and ſince you have patience to correſpond with a poet, try to familiarize yourſelf a little with the language of Parnaſſus. Never fear my exceeding your inſtructions, in the credit I give to perſons whom you recommend. I underſtand you perfectly, know the limits which you wiſh to be obſerved, and ſhall never exceed them.

Command me with more freedom, and do not let me have the mortification of always recognizing in your orders themſelves, a certain apprehenſion of incommoding me, which ſeems a tacit cenſure of the manner with which I have abuſed your active friendſhip.

LETTER XVI.

TO THE ABATE PASQUINI.

I TAKE time, my dear Paſquini, in anſwering your letter of laſt February, becauſe, the buſineſs it contains, will not be injured by delay; and becauſe my negligence will be treated with more indulgence, by ſuch a man as you, than by a thouſand others, who exact with more rigour the performance of every duty, in proportion to the inſecurity of their friendſhips.

Your imagining my laſt letter artful, is a certain proof that we are not agreed about the idea of *true* and *falſe*, of *ſimple* and *artificial*. The confeſſing that I had received a letter from you ſometime ſince, but did not anſwer it, leſt it ſhould bring on ſome diſagreeable diſcuſſions, appears to me a truth ſo naked and unadorned, that to have ſuppreſſed it from a confidential friend, would have been harſh, and uncourteous. That all men are bound by the laws of nature, to aſſiſt the unhappy, but that the obligation of protecting merit, is reſerved for the powerful,

ful, are ſimple and inconteſtible propoſitions. That it would be as inhuman not to ſuccour our equals, as ridiculous to pretend to protect them, is a corollary which neceſſarily ariſes out of the preceding axiom. Now have the charity to tell me, how you were able to diſcover in a letter which contains truths ſo ſolid and ſo undiſguiſed, an artifice ſo ſubtil as to be as much out of the reach of my penetration now, as it was diſtant from my thoughts when it was written? If the tenour of that letter was artful, the contrary will be ſimple: the following is therefore, according to your opinion, the manner in which I ſhould have written, in order to avoid being artful: *I have been prevented from anſwering your letter by the multiplicity of my avocations, the want of health, the fault of the poſt which has been later than uſual, &c. I am extremely unhappy at my inability to perform thoſe offices for you which you require, having already expended my intereſt in favour of another, previous to your application; or elſe I ſhall do every thing in my power to ſecond your wiſhes*, and then without lying, avail myſelf in negotiating the buſineſs of the condition, *as much as poſſible.*

This

This may be the frank and ſimple manner which you wiſhed for in my laſt letter: but before I adopt it, my dear Paſquini, I muſt make the experiment: *and hoc opus.* Adieu, my dear friend. Take care of your health, and believe me, without the leaſt ſhadow of art, &c.

Vienna, April 15, 1756.

LETTER XVII.

TO THE SAME.

You cannot be ignorant, my dear Paſquini, of the circumſtances in which the Empreſs Queen finds herſelf at preſent. You know that in order to avoid being ſwallowed up by a greedy neighbour, ſhe is obliged to have in the field, one hundred and ſixty thouſand of her own troops; without enumerating thoſe of a ſingle ally, or mentioning ſeventy or eighty thouſand ſtationed in different garriſons. And in knowing this, you may imagine how empty that treaſury muſt be, while the uſual revenue of her anceſtors, who were never put to half this expence, is ſo much diminiſhed; and yet, in ſpite of this information, you wiſh to draw water from ſo exhauſted

exhauſted a fountain. But though this is an indubitable proof of the urgency of your wants, which penetrates me with compaſſion, yet it does not inſpire me, for a moment, with ſufficient courage to attempt a meaſure, which without being of any uſe to you, would juſtly entitle me to cenſure for my indiſcretion. You muſt be certain that public diſtreſs muſt neceſſarily occaſion private; and will therefore, I hope, pity me, if to ſympathiſe in your diſtreſs, is all the aſſiſtance, at preſent, in the power of your, &c.

Vienna, September 20, 1756.

LETTER XVIII.

TO THE SAME.

I AM extremely diſſatisfied with your ſilence, and ſhould be infinitely more diſcontented, if the occaſion of it diſpleaſed me leſs. Your ſuffering under an infirmity is a ſufficient excuſe for you, but is no conſolation for me; nor at ſuch a price do I wiſh to be innocent. If ever it ſhould happen again, that through the temptation of the devil, you ſhould think me guilty of neglecting you, take care not to have recourſe to the ſtratagem

ſtratagem of illneſs. You may be miſtaken for once in your meaſures; and ſuch errors are pardonable. Let me rather ſcold: but what will be the conſequence? Your ears muſt already be callous to my paternal homilies; and you know, by long experience, that I bite like a ſheep, and not like a wolf.

My nervous affections are this year much encreaſed by the arrival of winter, and my patience is proportionably diminiſhed. But what can I do? I have nothing for it but to ſuffer and hope: every weight ill carried is encreaſed in gravity. And as it is impoſſible for us to make human miſery accommodate itſelf to our will, it is more prudent, and leſs fruitleſs, for us to try to accommodate ourſelves to human miſery.

But let us not plunge into the moralizing gulph. This is very often an hypochondriac effect, which by encouraging complaint, becomes itſelf a new cauſe for it.

Vienna, October 8, 1756.

We are enabled, by the correſpondence with Paſquini, to judge of the frank and open manner with which our poet treated his old and intimate friends: and the following letter

letter may ſerve as a ſpecimen of the delicacy and politeneſs with which he received the proffered friendſhip of new correſpondents, who wiſhed for his opinion of their works.

LETTER XIX.

TO THE CAVALIER ANTON-FILIPPO ADAMI.

I SHALL not dwell long on the exceſſive expreſſions of eſteem with which you are pleaſed to honour me, in order to ſhun the fatigue and difficulty of defending myſelf from the aſſaults of vanity, by which, authorized by your approbation, I may be inſidiouſly ſeduced. I am confuſed at the favourable judgment which you pronounce; but ſhall not try to undeceive you, for fear I ſhould ſhake the foundation of that friendſhip which you offer me, and which I wiſh to merit. I have repeatedly peruſed, Sir, and always with juſt admiration, the ſonnets which you have been pleaſed to communicate to me. I have found in them all, a robuſt and noble ſtyle, deep learning, lively fancy, and, finally, that unity, proportion, and correſpondence of the ſeveral parts, which diſtinguiſh an inhabit-

inhabitant of Parnaſſus from a traveller. Though I am pleaſed with them all, yet the ſonnets on Providence have ſtruck me the moſt. Perhaps the leſs auſtere phyſiognomy of theſe, exalts their comparative merit.

Whenever you ſhall be pleaſed to communicate to me your correct and poliſhed productions, they will always afford me pleaſure; particularly if they are accompanied with ſuch commands as may afford me an opportunity, of manifeſting with how much reſpect, and zeal, I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XX.

TO THE CAVALIER FARINELLI.

I AM proud, my dear Gemello, of the curioſity which you tell me I have raiſed in you concerning SIGNORA GABRIELLI; as, to the peculiar and uncommon merit of this young perſon, there is a coincidence of opinion: and this you may know from our friend Count *Roſenberg*, whoſe teſtimony is of weight; and you can examine him at your leiſure. But as to the commiſſion which you have given me of ſounding this virtuoſo in order

order to diſcover her ſentiments concerning an engagement for your royal theatre, I am a great novice at it, and indeed have a natural averſion to this kind of buſineſs: however, I have executed it exactly. What would one not undertake for a Gemello?

The ſounding is reduced to this: whether ſhe *will*, *can*, and *on what conditions?* It is unneceſſary to enquire whether ſhe *will* accept of an honour at which all are aſpiring; but to the common eagerneſs, ſhe has the ſtimulus of wiſhing for a perſonal acquaintance with You; being perſuaded, that by obſervation and attention, ſhe might acquire from your kindneſs, ſuch intelligence in her profeſſion as is not to be obtained elſewhere. So that the firſt point meets with no impediment.

Whether ſhe *can* engage herſelf, is an article of ſtill leſs difficulty: for ſhe is not only able, but can do it at your convenience: this muſt be explained. Signora Gabrielli is ſtill engaged at this Imperial theatre for two years more; but our auguſt patroneſs having lately reſolved to ſhut the lyric theatre during the preſent war, has had the clemency to acquaint this performer, that though her contract will not be terminated theſe two years,

years, ſhe is at liberty to engage herſelf elſewhere, if ſhe ſhould not chuſe to remain idle. So that ſhe can immediately enter into your ſervice, and for as long a time as you pleaſe.

And finally, as to the *conditions* upon which ſhe chuſes to engage, they ſeem extremely diſcreet. She propoſes the ſalary of *Mingotti* as a model; to whom ſhe is ſuperior in voice, agility, and figure, in female parts, and in other theatrical circumſtances. She is ignorant what was allowed to her predeceſſor for travelling expences; but doubts not that the diſtance, and the companion which ſhe muſt inevitably have in her journey, will be conſidered.

I have now executed your commiſſion; and in return for my punctuality, I beg of you to be ſpeedy in your anſwer, as this virtuoſa, being unemployed, will doubtleſs have offers from other quarters; and it is but juſt that ſhe ſhould know whether ſhe may accept them.

I diſcover new rivals every day: *Count Kaunitz* has ſpoken to me of you with great eſteem and affection; and has particularly deſired me to aſk you, whether he ſtood as high in your favour now, as he did formerly, at Bologna.

You, my dear Gemello, are a Swiſs, graft-

ed on a Piemonteſe; that is (among friends) obſtinate as the one, and ſubtile as the other. I wrote for you: *Non prendo ancor l'impegno*; and you, like a good Piemonteſe, praiſed my verſes, and explained them in a contrary ſenſe; and like a perfect Swiſs, return at midnight to your cups. Bleſs you! my dear friend. You are in poſſeſſion of a conjuring wand, and can do what you pleaſe. But let me now ſpeak of myſelf.

I am unable to ſet about my new work at preſent, having four little auguſt patroneſſes, who are fond of ſinging, that inceſſantly honour me with their commands. In ſummer they go into the country, and rural amuſements uſually ſerve as a parentheſis to muſic. I then hope to be wholly yours, if my nervous complaints do not drive me out of myſelf. In the mean time, I am trying to find ſome ſubject which will admit of the decorations which you have in your head. The aſſault, ſcaling-ladder, and taking a fort, in the ancient manner, are not incompatible with the decorations of our theatres at preſent, which are quite heroic; but a *Fair*, and *illumined Shops*, are wholly comic, and I know not how they would be received by the ſpectators. *Stampiglia* introduced them during

the

the laſt century in one of his dramas called *Appius Claudius*. But comic characters had a principal ſhare in this drama, and operas were then the baſtards of comedy and tragedy, which by degrees are become legitimate and ſeparate families. You may very well have an illumined ſquare in the night, and inſtead of ſhops, may illuminate porticos, veſtibles of temples, and other public buildings; but I dare not mention either *Fair* or *Shop* in my directions for ſhifting the ſcenes: as it would be giving a handle to the flippant impertinence of our little Roman Abate, with whoſe modeſty you are well acquainted.

You, who know the country in which you reſide, can judge whether its inhabitants are equally delicate: and in caſe they are not, you might announce in the book of the words *a ſquare illuminated in a feſtive manner during the night*. And in this ſquare you may repreſent ſuch architecture as you ſhall think likely to delight the ſpectators. Give me a word or two, at your leiſure, that I may meet your ideas, when the occupations in which I am engaged, and my capricious health, ſhall chance to give me permiſſion.

I could have ſworn that I had ſpoken to you concerning *Monſignor l'Augier (p)*. He is charmed with You, with your heart, and your conduct. He often viſits me, notwithſtanding his immeaſurable corpulency; and mounts to the third ſtory, where I reſide, with the lightneſs of the moſt ſlim dancer. I ſhall for your ſake, embrace as much as poſſible of his majeſtic circumference.

Monſignor Migazzi is at his biſhopric: and he is deſtined by many here to ſucceed the dying archbiſhop of Vienna. I believe he does not aſpire at this honour. He would not be a gainer in revenue, and would loſe in tranquillity more than he would acquire in rank.

Before I finiſh my letter, I muſt add two reflections. The firſt is, that *Signora Gabrielli*, like the *Mingotti*, expects to have the *principal female part* aſſigned her, and that it ſhould be *expreſſed* in the contract. The ſecond reflection is my own, and is to adviſe you, if you have any intention that ſhe ſhould ſet out next ſummer, inſtantly to

(p) See *Germ. Tour* Vol. I. Art. Vienna. The phyſician of the Pope, and, I ſuppoſe, the Imperial, phyſician, are qualified with the Title of *Monſignor*, my Lord.

ſend

ſend a contract for her to ſign, to counteract all ſuch temptations as ſhe will certainly have from other quarters. Adieu, my dear Gemello. I can write no more. . . .

Vienna, February 12, 1756.

LETTER XXI.

TO THE SAME.

In ſpite of my involuntary delay, I am not in much fear of my dear Gemello accuſing me in his own heart: he is perfectly acquainted with mine, and therefore incapable of believing me either cold in my friendſhip, or inſincere in my promiſes. My obſtinate nervous complaints; numerous inevitable diſtractions; the certainty of your not being in a hurry; but above all, the ill-humour of my capricious muſe, have conſpired to impede my ſending you the little cantata which you deſired for two voices, ſo ſoon as I wiſhed and had promiſed. Now, that you may allow me to be a conſcientious man, I ſhall pay my debt with an intereſt of cent per cent; and, inſtead of one cantata, ſend you two, written expreſsly for your uſe. The one intitled, L'Ape, *(the Bee)*

more ſportive and chearful; and the other, which I have baptized, LA RITROSIA DISARMATA, *(peeviſhneſs diſarmed)* more lively and characteriſtic *(q)*. Both are calculated for action: and each, with two ſimple dreſſes, and a little verdant ſcene, may, on ſhort notice, be performed as occaſion ſhall ſerve. If you find nothing to pleaſe you in theſe productions, they will at leaſt ſerve as teſtimonies of the author's friendly zeal; who hopes that you will continue to love him with the ſame affection as he loves you.

Vienna, Auguſt 21, 1756.

LETTER XXII.

TO THE SAME.

ON Tueſday evening, the 2d inſt. (November) I received from the chancery of our court,

(q) The date of theſe cantatas, which is erroneous in the laſt *Paris* edition, has been copied in all the ſubſequent impreſſions of our author's works, down to that of *Nice*, the moſt accurate and ample of them all. L'APE has been ſaid to be written for the Catholic court, in 1760; and LA RITROSIA DISARMATA in 1759; miſtakes which will be corrected by the date of this letter, as well as by the hiſtory of

court, your letter of the 29th of September. So that to my great impatience, you ſee that it was thirty-four days on the road; which occaſioned me the ſhame, and mortification, of thinking that you had neglected me, or been childiſhly myſterious concerning the fate of NITTETI; that was delivered here with ſeveral letters, a fortnight ago. God knows where the courier has diverted himſelf; but of this I am certain, that your letter has not been detained a moment at the chancery. The riſks of private conveyance, my moſt beloved Gemello, have long determined me, to ſend my letters conſtantly by the poſt, on the certainty of their being delivered to you in two and twenty days. But let us waſte no more time in ſuch a uſeleſs diſcuſſion. I rejoice with you ſincerely, in the univerſal applauſe and admiration, which the magnificence and ſplendor with which you have ſeaſoned my *Nitteti*, have procured her. Who would not gladly write operas with the certainty of their becoming prodigies in your hands?

You tell me, that by the time your letter

of the times; the princes, for the uſe of whoſe court theſe little pieces were written, being both deceaſed at the time they have been ſaid to be produced.

arrives, I muſt have received two copies of the opera. Theſe are not yet arrived, and I know not where to ſeek them, as you have not mentioned by what channel they were to be conveyed. The beſt part of the ſtory is, that the opera is already printed at Rome, and it may happen, that this edition will arrive at Vienna before that of Madrid.

I have now to teaze you. *Cardinal Landi* has a ſecretary, who is a poet; he is an Abate of the name of BANDINI. He has written ſeveral dramas, one of which, entitled *Sylla*, I have ſeen, and find it very happily verſified, and not devoid of theatrical merit. In ſhort, he is, in my opinion, the beſt writer, in that way, among thoſe who are at preſent employed. He aſpires much at the glory of ſeeing ſome of his offspring appear on your royal theatre; and his Cardinal has written me a long and preſſing letter about him, as if a word from me were ſufficient to eſtabliſh him in your favour. That word you have now received: its effect depends on your convenience. All I require is an atteſtation from you, that I have performed my part in the buſineſs; therefore, in your next letter to me, pray inſert ſuch a para-

graph

graph as I may tranſmit to the cardinal, to unburthen myſelf of the commiſſion.

I am proud of the affectionate contention between you and our dear *Count Roſenberg*; but I laugh at the impoſſibility of either of you imitating, the inimitable tenderneſs with which I am both his and your ſervant.

Vienna, November 6, 1756.

LETTER XXIII.

TO THE SAME.

AT length I have been informed, that two little books directed to me were in the cuſtom-houſe, and the day before yeſterday they were brought to me, with a letter incloſed from my amiable Gemello, written September 12th; ſo that malignant fate has kept it back two months, in ſpite of all your care and diligence. It ſeemed neceſſary to inform you of this; leſt from the tenour of my laſt letter, you ſhould imagine both the books and your own letter loſt. Your expreſſions perfectly agree with the partiality which you have always had for me and my writings.

writings. Such convincing proofs of eſteem and affection are grateful, even from indifferent perſons; conſider then what delight they muſt afford, when they are beſtowed by perſons beloved in ſuch a manner as you are, by your moſt faithful Gemello.

I know not whether the model of my *Beroe** reſembles your Spaniſh young females; but this I know, that compared with ours, I ſeem to have violated the rules of probability.

Migazzi has not yet appeared. Embrace my tyrant *Roſenberg*; but with ſuch heartineſs that he ſhall remember it: my ſlighted tenderneſs merits ſuch vengeance. You muſt not forget an oſtenſible period for *Cardinal Landi*, and believe me bomb proof.

Vienna, November 13, 1756.

LETTER XXIV.

TO THE SAME.

I SHALL anſwer the two letters, which though written at the diſtance of a month from each other, are now juſt arrived together; I know not whether from that which was firſt written travelling too ſlow,

* A character in *Nitteti*.

or

or the ſecond too faſt; but however this may have been, I ſhall now give you an account of my commiſſions.

With reſpect to the duet, I think you are too complacent in humouring all the caprices of our fingers. Ever ſince I began to write poetry for muſic, I, who am not by many miles ſo good as you are, have ſhut, nailed, or rather built up, the door, againſt all changes of words. We ſhould be harraſſed indeed, if every maggoty theatrical Nymph, dainty Adonis, or foppiſh Compoſer, were to decide on the merit of the poetry, and make us change the parts of an edifice, as if it were compoſed of cards. You who are now ſubject to theſe plagues, tell me if it does not ſeem neceſſary to repreſs the unbridled impertinence of theſe people. But do not imagine, moſt beloved Gemello, that all this preaching ariſes from an averſion to labour, or unwillingneſs to oblige you: to remove all doubt of my reluctance, I incloſe the duet, not only changed in one, but in two different ways; there is nothing diſagreeable to me, which pleaſes my dear Gemello; but it is neceſſary to check your uſual facility, that you may not be always the victim of unreaſonable people, who are

never to be ſatisfied. If you had aſſigned a reaſon for wiſhing to change the duet, I ſhould have adapted myſelf to the opinion of others; but this is, to divine it blind-fold: and though I paſs for a middling poet, yet I have nothing of the prophet in me. In your ſecond letter, you ſay: "now they will have no duet:" *fiat lux—make it then*, ſays Arlequin. Well, Heaven grant you patience. Though, as far as I can ſee, you have already as much as Job or St. Hilary.

At length our noble and worthy *Monſignor Migazzi* is arrived in Vienna: and at our firſt meeting we have almoſt ſuffocated each other with the number and violence of our embraces, and thoſe which he brought from you, by commiſſion. I have put his patience to extraordinary trials, with my numerous and minute queſtions concerning your health, way of life, friendſhip for me, and the public approbation which you have ſo well contrived to merit. He went ſo far as to tell me, that, conſcious of your heroic conduct in circumſtances ſo ſeducing, he might venture to canoniſe you without the fear of oppoſition. Figure to yourſelf, if you can, how ſweet ſuch muſic muſt be to the ears of your

your moſt faithful and affectionate Gemello. Heaven preſerve and bleſs you, *Amen.*

I am told this inſtant, that my moſt auguſt Patroneſs is happily brought to bed of a little Arch-duke. *Te Deum laudamus.* I hope that providence, which has hitherto preſerved her in ſimilar circumſtances, will protect her from all accidents. The chriſtning will be at 7 o'clock this evening, and the new terreſtial pilgrim will be named Maximilian. This is being a very obliging conſort, to preſent her huſband with a male child on his own birth-day. But what cannot the admirable MARIA THERESA do? I write amidſt the harmonious acclamations of the people, who are running in crouds towards the court. The opera which will be repreſented to-night in the public theatre, will certainly meet with applauſe: what is there that cannot pleaſe on ſuch a day? The drama is my *Re Paſtore*, ſet by Gluck; a Bohemian compoſer, whoſe ſpirit, noiſe, and extravagance, have ſupplied the place of merit in many theatres of Europe, among thoſe whom I pity, and who do not conſtitute the minority of the folks of this world. Thank God, we have no want of ſuch auditors here.

The

The firſt woman is *Signora Catarina* GABRIELLI, *Romana*: a young performer, who certainly has not her equal for excellence in voice, taſte, or action. (Pray take notice by way of Parentheſis, that I am not in love with her.) Our *Monſignor l'Augier*, when he firſt heard her, burſt into rapturous expreſſions of wonder and delight; and it was only doing her juſtice. The firſt man is Sig. MAZZANTI, a great player on the violin infalſet; but even He has his admirers, as we have palates for every kind of ſauce. When I hear ſinging, I am not ſatisfied with mere ſurpriſe, but wiſh the heart to have a ſhare in the delights of the ear. But this is a ſcience granted only to few; and nature does not often go out of her way to make FARINELLIS. The other ſingers of our opera, to ſhorten my narrative, you may imagine what you pleaſe.

I am glad you eſteem our moſt worthy *Count de Roſenbergh*: in this particular, I have no pretenſions to emulate you; but as to love, I ſhall claim my ancient rights with my utmoſt vigour. If you are guilty of any foul play, expect a furious ſatire in your praiſe, in which my rival will have the principal part. In the act of reverencing

and

and embracing him in my name, I leave you to chant the Antiphon.

Cruel Gemello! and do you ſtill want me to ſuffer the pangs of child-birth again! After ſo many labours, do you think I have not loſt the power of bringing forth? Do all the nauſeas, the breeding qualms; the throes, and fears of miſcarriages and abortions, which I have experienced, go for nothing? any more than the apprehenſions, occaſioned by the rank and penetration of the demy-gods for whom I am to encreaſe my offspring? I have been ſo rewarded, that I have not the courage to refuſe; but I fear the enterpriſe ſo much, that I dare not undertake it.

Non ti minaccio ſdegno,
Non ti prometto amor:
Non prendo ancor l'impegno,
Non lo ricuſo ancor (r).

I threaten not diſdain,
Nor flatt'ring language uſe;
My ſentence I reſtrain,
But do not quite refuſe.

Adieu my ever dear and admirable Gemello.

Vienna, December 8, 1756.

(r) Parody of an air in the firſt act of *Catone in Utica.*

LET-

LETTER XXV.

TO THE SAME.

You tell ſo many people that you love me, and publiſh it ſo expreſsly in print, that there is not a corner of the habitable earth ſo obſcure, as to be ignorant of my enviable good fortune (*s*). I pay you with intereſt; and am pleaſed, that a kind of public compact, ſecures to me a friendſhip which indeed has no occaſion for props to ſupport it: as it is founded upon an ancient reciprocal, affectionate, and diſintereſted, propenſity. But as every medal has its reverſe; this, my dear Gemello, is not in want of one. Innumerable are the people who aſpire at the patronage of your court, who ſigh for your ſupport, and who apply to me as to your Benjamin. There is no character that I abhor ſo much as an encroaching and importunate acquaintance. And as I know you

(*s*) Alluding to the account publiſhed in all the gazettes and newſpapers of the time, concerning the ſucceſs, and ſplendid manner in which the dramas of Metaſtaſio were repreſented at the court of Spain.

muſt be teazed from morning to night by indiſcreet pretenders, I am ſeized with a ſhivering fit, when any one of the hundreds of this kind of cattle accoſts me with the melifluous interrogation of: *when, Sig. Abate, ſhall you write to your dear Gemello?* But in order to parry the thruſt, I immediately reply that I have juſt written, and that we only correſpond at the moveable feaſts. Some underſtand me, and are ſilent; but the major part are ticks, and ſtick ſo cloſe to me, that it is impoſſible to get rid of them, but by ſpeaking the truth, and proteſting, that I neither will nor ought to importune you, to expend your intereſt for perſons utterly unknown to you. But when by this and other means I have freed myſelf from a hundred aſſaults of a ſimilar kind, comes the hundred and firſt petition, which from reſpect, obligation, or the influence of a friend, and perhaps from a little ſecret pride of keeping alive my credit with you, I have not the power to reſiſt.

Of this laſt kind is the requeſt which has been made to me by COUNT FIGUEROLA, counſellor in the ſupreme council of Flanders; a moſt worthy man, of great credit, and my particular friend. He has a brother

in Spain, called *D. Antonio Figuerola*, who is in great want of your intereſt, in ſupport of his pretenſions to be appointed *Lieutenant Corregidor of the city of Tarazona*, in *Catalogna:* and I implore your kindneſs in his favour. From the repugnance which you know I have to trouble you on ſuch occaſions, you may judge of the impulſe which has forced me to ſubdue it. I can offer you no return but the pleaſure which your beneficient nature finds in performing kind offices. The petition will be made to you by *Count Roſemberg*, to whom *Count Figuerola* tells me he has written: and in this buſineſs, I enter into partnerſhip with him, in ſpite of our rivalſhip. But that the length of my letter may not be more fatiguing than the recommendation, I embrace you with my accuſtomed affection, and am, &c.

Our auguſt Patroneſs thinks no more of her lying-in; ſhe has already admitted many ladies to kiſs her hands, and cannot be prevented from reſuming her attention to public affairs.

Vienna, December 18, 1756.

END OF THE THIRD SECTION.

SECTION IV.

METASTASIO ſeems never to have plunged into politics with his pacific friend Farinelli; but during the heat of the war of 1756, between the King of Pruſſia and the Empreſs Queen, he appears in his letters to his brother, and a few of his other correſpondents, to have eſpouſed the intereſts of his Imperial Patroneſs with great zeal, and to have mentioned with heartfelt pleaſure, every advantage which fortune conceded to her arms.

In a letter to the Marquis Carlo Cavalli of Ravenna, January 3d, 1757, he ſays: "the news of this great empire is ſo intereſting to the reſt of the world, that there is hardly a corner of the earth which does not feel anxious for its fate. Its cauſe is to vindicate all humanity from the injuries which it ſuffers from the violation of charity, juſtice, and good faith, the moſt neceſſary bonds of ſociety.

"Our moſt beloved ſovereign has in Bohemia, one hundred and forty thouſand men,

well provided, without mentioning a ſingle foreigner. Muſcovy has in motion, one hundred and thirty thouſand, and France as many. On the 11th of the preſent month, the diet of Ratiſbon will proceed to declare this a war of the empire; and laſtly, the grand Signor of the Turks will concur in helping to oppreſs the oppreſſor; ſo that if ſome unforeſeen accident does not prevent it, I know not how the enemy can eſcape deſtruction."

But previous to this period, at the beginning of hoſtilities, he writes his brother word, that "on the 28th of Auguſt, (1756) the King of Pruſſia entered Saxony with a conſiderable army; laid the country under contribution, and the good King (Auguſtus II.) who had given him no offence. It is pretended, that the extraordinary number of troops which we had ſent into Bohemia and Moravia, had made him expect to be aſſailed, and determined him to prevent us by an irruption into Bohemia: but hearing ſome months ago of his motions, theſe provinces were put into a ſtate of defence." And he afterwards tells his brother, that the two armies of the King of Pruſſia are retiring

from Bohemia, notwithſtanding his boaſted victory at Loboſitz, in which we are now certain that he loſt ſeven generals. The King of Poland is at Warſaw, but all the royal family ſtill remains at Dreſden. Theſe are curious times.

"We have here (at Vienna) our modern *Fabius*, and our *Marcellus*; ſo that martial ire ſleeps at preſent. The declaration of war by the King of Spain, furniſhes much ſubject for converſation. Hoſtilities will now acquire freſh vigour, inſtead of becoming more calm, if the Engliſh do not lower their imperious tone. A difficult metamorphoſis to bring about.

"To the common news of the Czarina's death, which you and every one muſt have heard, let me add the following information, which is juſt come: *Yeſterday arrived a courier from Peterſburgh, at this court, with two letters written by the new Czar to the Emperor and Empreſs; in which is confirmed, the alliance and engagements contracted by the late ſovereign with the court of Auſtria, in all their moſt minute circumſtances.*"

This declaration, however, was enfeebled ſoon after, by the following information.—

"*A courier from Peterſburgh laſt Tueſday*, brings word, that *Warantzof*, the Czar's prime miniſter, had communicated to ours, and to the miniſters of other courts, *that his maſter, ſtimulated by motives of humanity, ardently wiſhed that the horrors of this obſtinate war ſhould ceaſe; and that his allies might adopt his pacific ſentiments, he was ready to relinquiſh all advantages.*"—This declaration was but the prelude to neutrality, and the preſage of that diſunion of the courts of Peterſburgh and Vienna, which ſoon happened, to the great relief of the King of Pruſſia, at a time when his ruin was thought inevitable. Metaſtaſio details to his brother, the principal events of the times, till the year 1762, when the Czar was depoſed, and the preſent Empreſs, his conſort, aſcending the throne, declared war againſt the King of Pruſſia.

In 1757, our poet, always a faithful ſon of the church and city of Rome, and conſequently no well wiſher to the King of Pruſſia, and the proteſtant powers; though he conſtantly expreſſes himſelf with moderation, yet he writes triumphantly to his friend Sig. Argenvilliers, that "on the 12th of November, our Marchal Daun, after three vigorous attacks, had ſeized on

Schweidnitz. On the 22d, after thirteen attacks, he had entirely defeated the army before Breſlau, commanded by the Prince of Bevern, in their horrible trenches, which were thought inſuperable: an inſtance of valour, of which there has been no example for many ages. And this moment further intelligence is brought, that the commander, the Prince of Bevern himſelf, is made priſoner; but I am not yet acquainted with the particulars. I ſhould write more, but am going to ſee the general Duke d'Urſel paſs by, who formally brings the news, preceded by a proceſſion of poſtillions."

But ſoon after, he is obliged to confeſs to the ſame correſpondent, that the unfortunate battle of the 5th of December, and its neceſſary conſequence, the capitulation of Breſlau, were but too true. "A body of thirteen thouſand men who abandoned our left wing, rendered it impoſſible for our brave Auſtrians to ſave the town. We muſt have patience. Our troops are at preſent in winter quarters, but in that comfortleſs repoſe, which prepares for new fatigues."

LETTER I.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI, AT TURIN.

I AM more late than I wiſhed in anſwering your letter of laſt February, depending on your indulgence, more than on that of a number of troubleſome correſpondents to whom I am obliged to write, in anſwer to letters full of nothing; which, however, I dare not treat with neglect. You know that I am ſhot at by all the inſects of Parnaſſus; and not a week paſſes that I do not curſe the inventor of poſts, and wiſh him with all my heart in one of Dante's infernal bogs, with the little devil who *made the trumpet*, you know of what (*t*). But theſe are days of penitence, ſo we muſt curb our anger, and regard our perſecutions as expiations of poetical ſins.

If my *Nitteti* has found favour in your ſight, I ſhall congratulate myſelf on this new proof of your partiality. But if the Marquis Ormea has any intention of bringing it on

(*t*) See DANTE, *Inferno*, Canto xxi, at the end.

your

your ſtage, I muſt inform him, that its ſucceſs will entirely depend on the character of Nitteti being well acted.

I do not ſend you my cantata on the *Calidonian Chaſe*, becauſe your curioſity may be gratified by the Cavalier *Raiberti*, to whom Sig. Canale has furniſhed a copy. As to the performance and printing of this and Nitteti, with all the corrections and alterations that may be neceſſary, I leave them to my friends, as I never lick my own cubs; I ſhould have too much employment if I did.

The type and price of the new edition of my works are quite what they ſhould be; but the paper merits no praiſe. As to correctneſs, God help us!

Vienna, March 14, 1757.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

I SHALL anſwer your two letters of the 23d of laſt month, and the 7th inſtant, together. For the commiſſion in the firſt concerning COUNT GOVEANO, you have addreſſed yourſelf to a poor commiſſary; as I have but little communication with the military hierarchy. Add to this, that all our heroes are at preſent in the field; and that Prince *Litchtenſtein*, who is ſtill here, and to whom I intended to addreſs myſelf in favour of our ſtudious Cavalier, being extremely occupied at court, in the preſent agitation of public affairs, is not eaſily acceſſible; and if he was, I ſhould not find him in that tranquil ſtate of mind which I ſhould wiſh, for the furtherance of our buſineſs. However, when a favourable opportunity preſents itſelf, I ſhall not forget your petition. Now for the ſecond letter.

I envy the fate of my picture, which is ſo much carreſſed; and for a thouſand reaſons would change ſituations with it for ſome time

time to come. I am told, that it is extremely like; ſo that you may ſafely ſet your friendly and affectionate imagination to work.

I thank you for the ſolicitude concerning the correction of my works in this new edition. Pray deſire the printer to regulate his preſs by that of Paris: ſupplying, in my ſacred dramas, the omiſſions of the texts of ſcripture, and citations from the fathers. Theſe being no leſs neceſſary for the honour, than ſafety of the author.

I entreat you to expreſs my moſt grateful ſentiments to the worthy advocate, SIGNOR BRUNI, for his partial commemoration of me in your Licæum. Though I deſpair of ever deſerving it, yet I cannot help being ambitious of his friendſhip, of obeying his commands, and of manifeſting my opinion of his worth. Beſides public occaſions for ill-humour, a humour in my eyes gives me private cauſe for peeviſhneſs; I ſhall therefore haſten to aſſure you, that in all humours, I am, &c.

Vienna, May 23d, 1757.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

I SEND you *il Sogno*, correctly tranſcribed for the preſs; and a ſonnet on the laſt victory, which may ſerve as a counterpoiſon to the malignant piety of thoſe who would aſſign it to a miracle, in order to diminiſh the glory of thoſe who have earned it.

I have ſent a copy of the Roman edition of *Nitteti*, which has been corrected; but I muſt beg of you to tell the compoſitor to uſe no capitals, except at the beginning of a verſe, and to proper names. This drama ought abſolutely to precede the juvenile poetry, which is uſually called *additions*; but I ſhall be content with whatever place you ſhall aſſign it. The ſonnet to my dear FARINELLI ſhould have admiſſion among the lyric poetry, and not at the front of *Nitteti*. Forgive my unavoidable laconiſm, and believe me, &c.

Vienna, Auguſt 29, 1757.

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LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

WITH your moſt affectionate letter of the 22d of October, I receive proofs of three frontiſpieces to the Turin edition of my works. They appear to me in very good taſte; graceful, well deſigned, and well executed. I am much obliged to you for your care in this particular, and if the accuracy of the preſs is correſpondent, we ſhall have reaſon to be ſatisfied with the impreſſion.

I ſhall be glad of a few proofs, to gratify parental curioſity; but do not lay too heavy a burthen on the editors. You who have long known me, ſhould make me a little known to them. Adieu.

Vienna, November 7, 1757.

LETTER V.

TO THE ABATE PASQUINI.

THE lively deſcription which you make in your letter of the 13th of laſt month, concerning

cerning your ſufferings in the city of *Siena*, do more honour to the rhetoric than the philoſophy of the writer. If ever it ſhould come into your head to undertake it, I am certain that you could give a ſimilar aſpect to a reſidence at Rome or Athens. I admire this ſeducing faculty, and ſhould treat it with ſtill more reſpect, if you knew how to ſet a proper value on the advantages which are in your power; reflecting on all theſe deſirable circumſtances which can render life tolerable, if not happy. For though mortals are not gifted with the art of accommodating circumſtances to their convenience, they may accommodate themſelves to circumſtances. But methinks I hear you ſay, that it is eaſy to preach up faſting, upon a full ſtomach: and I tell you, that we have all occaſion for compaſſion, though all are not willing to beſtow it. For my own part, I muſt confeſs, either from moderation or pride, that I avoid, as much as poſſible, the finding from the pity of others, proofs of that miſery which I wiſh to conceal from myſelf. But enough of moralizing.

Count Richecourt, who ſet off for Florence this evening, told me a few nights ago, unſolicited, that he believed he ſhould

ſhould accompliſh your buſineſs; as nothing but the ſovereign's fiat was wanting, which from the diſpoſition in which he had brought and left him, he had no doubt of obtaining. The Emperor is in Bohemia: ſo that, at preſent, I am to give you no further information about it. But if the thing is done, you will perhaps hear of it before me. Suſpend your thanks, however, to the Count, till you canonically know that the favour is granted: as I had no commiſſion given me to tell you thus much. If ever this ripe apple has occaſion for another ſhake to bring it from the bough, I ſhall borrow the arm of COUNT LOSI. Do not paint misfortune with all the vigour of your genius. I am, &c.

Vienna, Auguſt 17, 1757.

Poor Paſquini's appointment was not confirmed till the next year, as appears by the following congratulatory letter from Metaſtaſio.

LETTER VI.

TO THE ABATE PASQUINI.

HAVING this moment received your moſt welcome letter of the 6th inſt. containing the long wiſhed for information of your being elected to the office of Vice-rector of your college, I congratulate not only you, but myſelf, and the *Siena Lycæum*, on this event.

I am extremely obliged to the *Abate Cantini*, who has ſo well ſeconded my zeal, and I wiſh you may long enjoy the fruits of this appointment, in that philoſophical tranquillity which gives to neceſſaries all the effect of opulence; not indeed in the ſuperabundance of wealth, but paucity of wants. Take care of your health, continue to love me, and to aſſure yourſelf, that I am with invariable conſtancy, &c.

Vienna, February 20, 1758.

This is the laſt letter in the collection from METASTASIO to PASQUINI. He is frequently mentioned with affection in ſubſequent

ſequent letters to his other correſpondents, particularly to LIVIA ACCARIGI, a poeteſs of a noble family at Siena, who ſent METASTASIO her works for his advice, or rather approbation. In concluding a letter to this lady, in October 1763, he ſays: "you enjoy the company of my admirable friend, *il Padre maeſtro* AZZONI. Pray put him frequently in mind of my eſteem and ſincere affection. How will PASQUINI triumph in having raviſhed him from me! I muſt have patience. But let him, at leaſt, appeaſe my envy, by giving me frequent proofs of his own affection."

In December following, however, addreſſing himſelf to the ſame lady at Siena; he ſays:

"The unhappy and unexpected loſs of our poor ABATE PASQUINI has truly wounded me to the heart. He was a man perfectly amiable in his natural character, diſtinct from his talents; and one who returned, with exemplary gratitude, the affection of his true friends. I feel, and ſhall long feel, the want of him; and the more ſo, on reflecting how great a loſs he muſt be to you, and to our moſt worthy PADRE AZZONI, who knew his merit, and how to prize even his

tranſports; which, though they varied his character, never depraved it.

" The continuation of your moſt valuable friendſhip will be a great ſource of conſolation to me; an acquiſition for which I ſhall be always grateful to the memory of my dear friend, from whoſe kindneſs it was derived. Try, dear Madam, to divert your attention from this afflicting event, by an innocent commerce with the muſes, who are ſo ready to favour you whenever you call upon them."

LETTER VII.

TO THE CAVALIER FARINELLI.

HAVING this inſtant read a categorical anſwer from SIGNORA GABRIELLI, I haſten to communicate it to you, in order to ſave the poſt. Your letter to me, my dear Gemello, was divided into two parts; the one contained a plain propoſition, and the other an inſinuation, to be uſed diſcretionally. The plain propoſition, was an offer of the place of SIGNORA PARIGI to the GABRIELLI, at Eaſter 1759. The ſecond clauſe, or inſinuation,

nuation, was to inform me, that it might be neceſſary to ſupply the place immediately, of the SIGNORA CASTELLINI, who had thoughts of returning to Italy.

To the plain propoſition or offer, SIGNORA GABRIELLI ſays, *that ſhe accepts*, with the moſt reſpectful ſubmiſſion, the honour propoſed to her of ſucceeding SIGNORA PARIGI in the ſervice of their moſt clement majeſties of Spain, at the feaſt of the reſurrection, in 1759; ſo that if the accuſtomed article is ſent, in which ſhe is allowed the title of firſt woman, with a ſalary of one thouſand two hundred doubloons, like that granted to the MINGOTTI, ſhe will immediately return a duplicate of it, ſigned and executed in the uſual manner. She adds, it is her hope, that the preſent which was made to the MINGOTTI, of three hundred doubloons more, will be granted to her, by the royal munificence of theſe ſovereigns, to defray the expence of ſo long a journey. And if this requeſt is complied with by their Catholic majeſties, ſhe entreats to have it ſpecified in the contract, as an honourable teſtimony of the generoſity with which *ſhe was treated* by *ſo great a court*. So that this firſt buſineſs ſeems finally adjuſted, and open to no objection.

The other has been inſinuated, and ſeems very feaſible. The GABRIELLI is ſo deſirous and impatient to throw herſelf at the feet of ſuch magnificent ſovereigns, in hopes of being honoured with their approbation, that ſhe will be very ready to obey their commands at Madrid, before the Eaſter of 1759, or the preſent autumn, if neceſſary; notwithſtanding that it depends only on herſelf to remain here in repoſe, during the two years which are unexpired of her contract, or to accept of the place of firſt woman at Milan. But as ſhe is perſuaded, that the clemency of theſe auguſt ſovereigns, and the equity of my dear Gemello, would not wiſh that ſhe ſhould injure her future intereſt by her zeal, ſhe preſumes to propoſe the following expedient.

That with the article for the Eaſter of 1759, in which ſhe has the title of *firſt woman*, another may be ſent for an earlier period, without the expreſſion of either *firſt* or *ſecond*, with the ſame annual ſalary and preſent, ſpecified in the firſt article.

And in conſideration of her reſpectful compliance with the ſecond propoſal, by relinquiſhing the title of *firſt woman*, ſhe hopes that it will be ſupplied by that of *Virtuoſa di*

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Camera, or ſimply, *Virtuoſa in the ſervice of their Catholic majeſties*, which is left to their ſovereign pleaſure and your diſcernment; and hopes, that her zeal and diligence will enable her to obtain that benign notice, which her limited talents may fail to merit.

I ought to be diffuſe in expreſſions of gratitude, reſpect, and prayers on the part of SIGNORA GABRIELLI, for the continuance of your partiality; but if I lengthen my letter, the poſt will go without it. You muſt therefore ſet your imagination to work in her behalf. I ſhall only add, that you will have a good bargain, which in your hands will ſoon be greatly encreaſed in its value: as there is excellent ſtuff to work upon.

His excellence, *Count Kaunitz*, embraces you affectionately, echoing moſt gratefully your own expreſſive language. My noſe is aſhamed of your generoſity. Adieu. The reſt is reſerved for another letter.

Vienna, April 24, 1757.

LETTER VIII.

TO THE SAME.

THE article in your letter of the 7th of June, concerning the melancholy accident that happened at the fireworks, has given me a high opinion of the ſenſibility of your heart; it could not, however, occaſion remorſe. I congratulate you on the laudable ſentiments of charity which this event awakened in your mind, and wiſh you an unlimited power of gratifying it.

I ſend you our SIGNORA GABRIELLI's article, ſigned and executed. And am commiſſioned to expreſs to you the confuſion, reverence, and ſubmiſſion, with which ſhe has received the royal teſtimonies of your magnanimous ſovereign's favour: and the indelible gratitude which ſhe ſhall always retain, for the benevolent and friendly hand that has procured her ſuch enviable honours. She wiſhes to teſtify all this in her own hand; and if her letter arrives, as I expect, before this is ſealed, I ſhall incloſe it.

While

While I write, you will partake of our felicity. You muſt have heard how the heroic conſtancy of our moſt auguſt ſovereign, the wiſdom of our cabinet, the maſterly conduct of MARSHAL DAUN, and the prodigious valour of our troops, have changed, in ſix hours time, the fate of Europe. You predicted this in your letter: ſo that I ſhall expedite to you, in form, a ſolemn patent of prophet. I ſhould gladly write more on this agreeable ſubject; but beſides your being previouſly informed of this event, a violent inflammation in my eyes has rendered writing a very painful operation; ſo that I ſhall deny myſelf the ſatisfaction of repeating an old ſtory.

Vienna, July 11, 1757.

LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

Oh what ſnuff! Oh what nectar for the Gods! Oh what a delicate and delicious drug! At length, the day before yeſterday, and not ſooner, the long wiſhed for cheſt arrived, after a thouſand dangers, impediments, and wanderings, more ſtrange than thoſe of

Ulyſſes. And yet it is ſtill in the higheſt perfection, without having ſuffered the leaſt injury from ſo long a voyage. It was hardly entered the houſe, before my impatient noſe went to work with great ſenſuality; and found three admirable different ſorts; but that in the two vaſes, upon which was written *Habana*, is as much ſuperior to the other two, as my Gemello is to all other heroes of the harmonic family. During theſe two days, every intelligent noſe of this country has admired and envied it: and I fatten with the glory, that all the proudeſt ſnuff boxes in the city give way, without the leaſt diſpute, to mine. And as there is not a mole that is ignorant of our twinſhip, whenever my *Havanah* is handed about in company, I hear a ſweet murmer, which, in repeating the name of my dear Gemello, exalts his ſupreme diſcernment in great as well as little things. Imagine to yourſelf my pleaſure, and how certain, if I had not been yours before, you were now of taking me by the noſe.

When you required me to return SIGNORA PARIOT's letter, I trembled leſt I ſhould have been ſo thoughtleſs as to burn it: as, in order to avoid confuſion, I generally do all letters that have been anſwered. But, thank

thank Heaven, I had preſerved this, and now return it. I cannot however avoid telling you, my dear Gemello, that you are too good a chriſtian, and pay too great attention to the follies of our tragi-comic nymphs, who only deſerve laughter, or at moſt, compaſſion. I ſhall be glad if our GABRIELLI is an exception to the rule. She commiſſions me to preſent her beſt compliments to you, and proteſts, that you are her *Cynoſure*, and that there is nothing of which ſhe is ſo ambitious, as of becoming your pupil.

I have not written to you a long while, partly not to teaze you about trifles, while I knew you were ſo buſy; partly from expecting the ſnuff every moment, and partly from the diſorder in my eyes, rendering both reading and writing very painful. And it is an enviable quality in me, not to bear to be alone when any evil has befallen me: You ſee how amiable my company muſt be at ſuch times.

My muſes, more harlots than ever, hardly, deign at preſent, to come near me; though I am now called upon by my little ſerene Patroneſſes, who are all more muſical than ever. However, if I had met with a happy ſubject, I ſhould have made them come whether they would

would or no, in order to ſatisfy the gluttony of my Gemello. But after writing ſo much, it is not eaſy to find ſubjects which will not bring me back to myſelf. Nevertheleſs, you are always next my heart; I think of you, and when I ſhall ſay *ti prometto amor*, the law will be inviolable. In the mean time, pardon me for writing little things for others; they coſt as much trouble as great, becauſe the difficulty is in the invention, not the number of verſes; and at laſt, do little credit. If you wiſh to put the muſes in good humour, it muſt be by a better account of your health. Regard my noſe as your ſlave to all eternity, and believe me, &c.

Vienna, October 22, 1757.

LETTER X.

TO THE SAME.

YOUR little, ſhort, and myſterious, letter of the 17th of laſt July, from *Aranjuez*, together with the news received at this court, and ſpread among us, tells me but too plainly, the ſtate of your mind, and anxiety of all good people, concerning the health

of your venerated ſovereign. Would to Heaven this ſtorm may blow over, in ſpite of the terrible deſcriptions which are ſent hither from all parts.

SIGNOR MARCHESINI, whom I cordially and gratefully ſalute, writes me word in your name, *that you are impatient for an anſwer from* MONTICELLI. How is it poſſible, that in ſo long a time, you ſhould not have received my final anſwer to this buſineſs, together *with Monticelli's original letter*; in which this Virtuoſo explains himſelf in the moſt unequivocal manner, by ſaying: that *the ſalary offered to him is inadequate to his expectations, and that you are at liberty to ſeek another ſinger?* I rather believe that Sig. Marcheſini has miſunderſtood your commiſſion, and applied to Monticelli, your impatience at the tardy arrival of *Monſignor l'Augier's* anſwer; who, (by way of parentheſis) upon being interrogated by me, ſwears upon the *agnus dei*, that he wrote to you on the 10th of June. Now theſe enormous irregularities in our correſpondence, are phænomena for which I am utterly unable to account. I recommend to you, in the diſcreet terms to which I always reſtrain myſelf, the affair of the *Marquis Doria*, ſecond-

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ing the wiſhes of our court. This is another ſirrup from which I am unable to exempt you; throw it down, and afterwards throw it up, if your ſtomach diſlikes it; but, for Heaven's ſake, anſwer me, or employ ſomebody elſe to ſave my credit.

Cardinal Alexander Albani, with whom I never was in correſpondence, writes to me in the moſt preſſing manner, to deſire, that in conſequence of our public and notorious affection, I would recommend to you, for your theatre royal, *Sig.* GIUSEPPE TOZZI, a ſoprano, whom I have never known, ſeen, or heard; nor did I ſuſpect, till now, that ſuch a perſon exiſted among us miſerable mortals. Tell me, in charity, how I can refuſe writing a letter, at the inſtigation of a pillar of the holy mother church? Tell me, in mercy, how far you think yourſelf obliged to attend to a recommendation, which is no further ſeconded by me, than it may happen to ſuit with your intereſt and convenience? Tell me, in compaſſion, what it will coſt you to give me two words of anſwer, that I may ſhew them for my juſtification? Adieu, my dear Gemelli, if you knew how dear you are to my heart, you would take care of your health. This letter is intended as the

letter of recommendation of SIGNOR TOZZI; ſo that I expect no *formal* anſwer to any other buſineſs.

Vienna, Auguſt 19, 1758.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE not the heart, my deareſt friend, to irritate your wounds by long complaints; I judge of what you muſt ſuffer, from the impreſſion which our irreparable loſs has made on my own mind; and ſhould rather think the attempt to conſole you, a cruelty, than an office of kindneſs. Time, neceſſity, reſignation to the will of providence, and your own prudence, and chriſtian reflexions, will obtain you that tranquillity, which it would be in vain for me to attempt to recommend to you. Take care of yourſelf, during this ſevere trial, and remember that you have innumerable companions in your moſt juſt and laudable affliction *(u)*.

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(u) This calamity, was the death of the Queen of Spain, Maria Barbara, infanta of Portugal. She was married to Ferdinand, Prince of Aſturias in 1728, who aſcended

I can no longer doubt, my dear friend, that many of my letters to you have miſcarried. The occaſion of this failure cannot have been at Vienna. I have made all poſſible enquiry, but find no cauſe for blame here. Do you do the ſame at Madrid, and try to diſcover, whether ſome ingenious perſonage has not tried to ſave you the tireſome taſk of reading my letters.

. . .

ended the throne of Spain in 1746. This Princeſs was the ſcholar and Patroneſs of *Domenico Scarlatti*, who compoſed his firſt two books of harpſichord leſſons, that were publiſhed in England by Roſcingrave, for her uſe. When ſhe went to Spain, in 1728, Scarlatti followed her thither, and continued to enjoy her favour till the time of his death, in 1757, at ſeventy-four. This original compoſer and great performer, like many men of genius and talents, was ſo inattentive to common concerns, and ſo much addicted to play, that he was frequently diſtreſſed in his circumſtances, and as often extricated by the bounty of his royal miſtreſs; who, as Farinelli aſſured me, not only often paid his debts, but, at his interceſſion, continued a penſion of four thouſand crowns to his widow and three daughters, who were left deſtitute at his deceaſe. The death of this Princeſs, whoſe liberality equalled her taſte and knowledge in muſic and poetry, was ſeverely felt by Metaſtaſio and Farinelli; who, though they long ſurvived their royal Patroneſs, enjoyed but ſeldom, afterwards, the fragrant incenſe of public acclamation, or of royal praiſe equally flattering, with that which they had ſo long been accuſtomed to receive from this Queen, whoſe name is ſtill mentioned with grateful reverence by the Spaniards.

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This failure may have been occaſioned by the irregularity of the poſt, as I ſent my letters by that channel, in order to avoid incommoding the miniſter more than was neceſſary; but, as my letters had hitherto been regularly delivered to you in this common way, it becomes an accident the more extraordinary, particularly, as *my letters to you concerning Monticelli are miſſing*. This is a circumſtance that may lead to a diſcovery. As far as I can remember, the following were the contents of theſe letters.

When you commiſſioned me to treat with Monticelli for Madrid, I had the propoſition made to him by the banker, and not by myſelf, that no ſuſpicions may be raiſed by the uſe of my name, during ſuch troubleſome times at Dreſden. Monticelli anſwered, that he was at liberty to accept the engagement, as his article with Dreſden expired exactly at the time that you ſhould want him. I gave you advice of all this; and with that ſincerity which is due to ſuch a friend as you, who confided in my report, I gave you a minute deſcription of the preſent qualifications of Monticelli, as to voice, manner, diligence, action, and way of thinking: in order that, by ſhewing you both ſides of the medal, you might

might judge of his powers, and act accordingly. To all this exactitude you have given me no kind of answer. You, however, sent me proposals for Monticelli, and I had them transcribed, word for word, and forwarded to Dresden. The answer of Monticelli was sent to me, and was in substance, "that the terms offered to him were not equal to the great expence and length of the journey: that he thanked you, and left you at liberty to treat with any other singer." For fear of altering a single word in this answer, I sent you the original, in Monticelli's hand writing, so long ago as last May.

Another business, concerning which I have had no answer, was the recommendation, by order of our court, of a certain Marquis Doria. And still another, concerning the indisposition of our Arch-bishop Migazzi. *Item.* In all these letters, I complained of your cruelty in speaking to me of writing operas, while the enemy was within nine posts of Vienna, bombarding Olmutz. And gave you to understand, that while so furious and bloody a war raged at our doors, it was not a time for a poor frightened gentleman, to be thinking of *Ariets*, or theatrical amours. But you took not the

least

leaſt notice of theſe impediments in your anſwer.

Item. In my letter of the 18th or 19th of laſt month, I recommended a Soprano ſinger of the name of *Tozzi*, for your theatre, at the inſtigation of his Eminence Cardinal Aleſſandro Albani; but to this no anſwer has yet arrived.

The pleaſantries which you hear from Italy concerning our *Signora Gabrielli*, are but too true. She is young, an Italian, favoured by nature, and of tranſcendant abilities in muſic: ſo that it is not extraordinary, that like other Sirens, ſhe ſhould be capricious. But in Your hands, I hope ſhe will be more prudent. She is perfectly perſuaded of her own merit, and yet is extremely timid. In order to moderate that impetuoſity which her talents may inſpire, it will, perhaps, be neceſſary to impreſs her mind with great reſpect, or rather, poſitive fear of the ſovereign and the court; but that it may not depreſs her ſpirits too much in performance, it will be neceſſary likewiſe for you to encourage her by your approbation, and the applauſe of your friends; and I aſſure you that ſhe will merit it. Indeed you are a more expert pilot than me, and I doubt not but you will turn your

ſcience to good account. At Vienna, Milan, and Lucca, where this young performer was dexterouſly managed, ſhe enchanted every mortal who heard her; but at Padua, where they wiſhed to uſe the whip more than the ſpur, they threw away their money.

I can write no more, my dear Gemello: I therefore embrace you tenderly, and am, &c.

Vienna, September 23, 1758.

LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE now to anſwer two of your dear letters, the one dated from Villavizioſa, the 2d of October, and the other the 16th; both filled with that juſt affliction which the preſent ſorrowful ſituation of your court inſpires, even at a diſtance.

The death of ſo admirable a Queen, and her royal conſort oppreſſed with grief for ſo irreparable a loſs, are objects for a diſintereſted ſervant, obliged, honoured, and full of affection and gratitude like yourſelf, that muſt inevitably plunge your mind in an abyſs of deſolation. I know not what to ſay *to* you, my dear friend, equal to what I

feel

feel *for* you. Yet I have no doubt, but that you, who have ſhewn the world how capable you are of reſiſting the flattering ſmiles of fortune, will know how to ſupport adverſity; and that your prudence will not wait for the aſſiſtance of neceſſity, to manifeſt wiſdom and chriſtian reſignation.

Your royal benefactreſs of glorious memory, knew your worth. Her teſtimony does honour to your diſintereſtedneſs, and her juſtice.

Monticelli died at Dreſden, they ſay by an accident. *Requieſcat!*

I am no performer on the harp, the inſtrument is too imperfect, and I envy no one who knows how to ſcatch it (*u*). Let me hear from you whenever you can, and to be aſſured if ever I loved you, it is now, when affection is inflamed by piety. Adieu, my dear Gemello.

Vienna, November, 1758.

(*u*) This ſevere cenſure of the harp, was made before the invention of pedals, and ſubſequent cultivation, had rendered it an inſtrument of ſuch execution, that Metaſtaſio, had he heard it played on by the admirable MADAME CRUMPHOLTZ, would have changed his ſatire into a panegyric.

This was a melancholy period of our bard's life. The loſſes which his Imperial Patrons frequently ſuſtained in the conflict with the King of Pruſſia, muſt have afflicted as well as incommoded him; and the mere narrations of the horrors of war, muſt at all times have *harrowed up the ſoul* of a being whoſe native diſpoſition was benign and gentle. In 1757 and 1758, he wrote few letters and fewer poems: indeed the only verſes of this time, which I find in his works, are the few lines which he addreſſed to the Empreſs Queen, on the victory at *Colin*.

In the early part of 1759, he addreſſed his friend Farinelli, on a ſubject which, it is to be feared, arrived at his knowledge at too inauſpicious a time to produce the deſired effect.

LETTER XIII.

TO THE CAVALIER FARINELLI.

In ſpite of the violence of my nervous complaints, of a number of diſagreeable employments, and the riſk of teazing you, I am unable to reſiſt the compaſſion which our

our poor friend *Porpora* excited in me yeſterday, when he entreated me to back the letter which I now encloſe, with one from myſelf. It is a circumſtance, my dear Gemello, ſufficient to draw tears from every one poſſeſſed of humanity, to ſee a man of ſuch merit in his profeſſion, reduced to an *abſolute want of daily bread*, by the well known misfortunes of Saxony, whence he derived a certain penſion, ſufficient, at leaſt, for his ſubſiſtence. Theſe are the only caſes in which I feel the narrow limits of my fortune; as I am unable to find in all philoſophy, any preſervatives that can mitigate the pain of being uſeleſs to the unhappy.

He ſuppoſes that your compaſſionate ſovereigns, from their munificence and charity, uſed to grant little penſions, under the title of Eleemoſynaries, to perſons in diſtreſs; and he entreats me to recommend him to your interceſſion, that he might obtain one which would juſt enable him to ſubſiſt, and this is not ſaying much.

It will be better explained by himſelf in his own letter, which I have not read; and to recommend him to my dear Gemello, is doing an injury to his good heart, of which

he has given, and daily gives, ſuch numerous and honourable proofs.

We are bound by every duty to ſuccour the poor *Porpora:* he is a man, and we are obliged to aſſiſt our fellow creatures: he is in want; he is of eminence, and a friend; he is old, and a ſmall pittance will ſave him from periſhing. Do you perform this meritorious work, my deareſt Gemello, if poſſible. It belongs particularly to your department in benevolence, to aſſiſt a perſon well known to all Europe; it will juſtly encreaſe the fame of your generous, beneficent, and well reſpected character; and I ſhall be perſonally obliged to you, for ſaving me from the pain of beholding the wreck of a man whom we have eſteemed from our early youth (*x*).

(*x*) PORPORA, though not the greateſt compoſer of his time, was univerſally allowed to be the greateſt *ſinging-maſter*. Farinelli had been his ſcholar, and they were in England together. Moſt of the great ſingers, male and female, of the firſt forty or fifty years of the preſent century, had been formed or finiſhed by him. The late Electreſs Dowager of Saxony, who had advanced into the myſteries of the art of muſic, further than moſt profeſſors, had been his ſcholar. Metaſtaſio himſelf had been initiated into the vocal art, and into that of compoſition, as far as was neceſſary for a lyric poet, by *Porpora*; and even the admirable Dr. Haydn confeſſes obligations to him, early in life, during his reſidence at Vienna, in the art of ſinging.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear Gemello. Do what your heart adviſes on this occaſion.

If ever the evil ſpirit ſhould call to your remembrance, any of *Porpora's* irregularities; forget not that the infirmities of the mind, merit equal compaſſion with thoſe of the body: and though *Porpora* ſhould not even deſerve aſſiſtance, *Farinelli* deſerves to be his benefactor.

Vienna, March 5, 1759.

LETTER XIV.

TO THE SAME.

YESTERDAY was delivered to me, your moſt welcome letter of the 2d of Auguſt, dated from Villavizioſa: and though tinctured with the gloomy colour reflected from your painful ſituation, it was great conſolation to me, to find, that, with your feeble ſtate of health, you have had ſufficient vigour to reſiſt ſo tremendous a ſhock. The fatal news of your beneficent king, having been delivered from his ſufferings, arrived at Vienna four days before your letter. It is to be hoped that the melancholy ſtate in

which he long remained without the leaſt chance of recovery, diminiſhed the violence of a blow which muſt have been expected, and which delivered a poor prince from the painful exiſtence in which he languiſhed. And yet, with all theſe ſolid reaſons, I judge, my dear Gemello, by the emotions of my own heart, what yours muſt be; but I promiſe myſelf much more from your virtue than mine; becauſe the examples of moderation with which you have ſo long furniſhed the world in the midſt of the moſt intoxicating ſmiles of fortune, give us aſſurances of your meeting her frowns with equal fortitude. Be of comfort, my dear Gemello: Inconſtancy in human affairs, is the univerſal condition on which we live, as every mortal knows by woeful experience. No misfortune, however, can rob you of the praiſe of not ſuffering yourſelf to be ſeduced or dazzled by the blaze with which you were ſo long ſurrounded. Your true friends, and all good men, will for ever love and honour you for ſo uncommon a quality, and will be always attached to you; but if there ſhould be any one who thinks differently, it will be no diſgrace, but an advantage to know and ſhun him.

I ſhall read your letter to our Archbiſhop. In the mean time, take care of your health: and be aſſured that I love you better than ever, and ſhall be always yours, whatever may happen to you.

P. S. The Jeſuit fathers of this college, commiſſion me by means of our Neapolitan father Cito, to thank you for the chriſtian fervor with which they know you have pleaded their innocence at your court.

Vienna, September 1, 1759.

The death of Farinelli's royal Patron, Ferdinand the Sixth, king of Spain, ſo ſoon after he had loſt his partial Patroneſs, the Queen, not only deprived him of his importance at that court, but ſeems to have bereaved him of all comfort during the reſt of his days. The Engliſh were generally at war with Spain during the reign of this Prince; and juſtice is ſeldom done, by the natives of a rival nation, to the virtues of a Monarch with whom they are at variance. We heard of nothing but his imbecility, ſuperſtition, and partiality to our enemies. Hiſtory, however, has treated him with more candour than the editors of Engliſh news papers, and allows,

allows, that he began his reign by acts of beneficence. He liberated priſoners, pardoned ſmugglers, and deſerters, and appropriated two days in the week to hear the complaints, and redreſs the grievances of his ſubjects. He took part in the war of 1741, and, at the peace of Aix la Chapelle in 1748, procured for one of his brothers the crown of the two Sicilies, and for another the Duchies of Parma and Placentia. He availed himſelf of the ſhort peace, to reform the abuſes of his government, and to protect arts, commerce, and agriculture. By his encouragement, manufactures of all kinds began to flouriſh, and the Spaniards now ſaw, for the firſt time, the original materials and productions of their own country, worked at home, into uſeful and ornamented productions of labour and ingenuity, for which they uſed to be tributary to the induſtry of other nations.

About this time, a correſpondence ſeems to have been revived between Metaſtaſio and *Count Florio*, who ſent him ſome of his poetical compoſitions. Though this is the firſt letter that has been preſerved of the correſpondence, the Count ſeems to have been an old acquaintance; and a confidential intercourſe

tercourſe between them, was continued for ſixteen years after the date of the following letter.

LETTER XV.

TO COUNT DANIEL FLORIO OF UDINE.

AMONG the many agreeable conſequences of the triumph of our wiſe and valiant Marſhal Daun, the moſt intereſting, to me, has been the opportunity it has afforded my moſt worthy Count Florio, of ornamenting the Italian Parnaſſus with his moſt elegant compoſitions, and honouring me with his letters. None of your productions had come to my hands till the receipt of your laſt letter, except the ſonnet addreſſed to the Ghoſt of *Schwerin*: and this had very much occupied my mind, with its lively and poetical images, and with the dignity of the thoughts and expreſſions; particularly in the firſt triplet, which, in my opinion, is the firſt in excellence, though its brethren are very beautiful. I was not only ignorant of the exiſtence of theſe poems, till the arrival of your letter, but even afterwards, quite at a loſs where to find them. I had recourſe, however,

ever, to foreign bookſellers who have at length put me in poſſeſſion of them. I found, in a ſmall collection, your moſt beautiful ode, accompanied by five ſonnets; and in a ſtill ſmaller, three ſonnets only, among which is that on the myſtery of the *Rod* and the *Ark*, with two others which I am not certain are derived from the ſame ſource. But they merit it at leaſt. The incloſed note will inform you of the contents of the two collections, and the beginning of each piece.

I am proud of the public opinion of the cultivated talents of my dear Count Florio, who has perfectly verified my predictions of him many years ago: and I not only congratulate myſelf and you, but Italy, on your ſucceſs.

My ſonnet has no other merit, than the truth with which it tries to defeat the malignity of thoſe who wiſhed to aſcribe the victory to a miracle, in order to diminiſh the merit of the victor. Indeed the ſonnet is not my province: I lie down very unwillingly on that bed of *Procuſtes:* and it is a miracle, when I riſe from it with whole bones. Believe me to be with the moſt conſtant eſteem and reſpect, &c.

Vienna, Auguſt 17, 1757.

The

The ſonnet by Metaſtaſio, alluded to in this letter, is the following, addreſſed to the Empreſs Queen. It was written on the victory obtained at *Colin*, in Bohemia, by the Auſtrian army, under the command of Marchal Count Daun, June 18, 1757.

ALL' AUGUSTISSIMA

IMPERATRICE REGINA.

SONETTO.

Oh qual, Tereſa, al ſuo ſplendor natìo
Nuovo aggiunge ſplendore oggi il tuo Nome!
Ecco a ſeconda del comun deſìo
Le orgoglioſe falangi oppreſſe, e dome.

Di guerra il nembo impetuoſo, e rio
Sveller parea gli allori alle tue chiome:
Tu in Dio fidaſti, Auguſta Donna; e Dio
In favor tuo ſi dichiarò: ma come?

Il Sol non Sarreſtò nel gran cimento:
Il mar non ſi diviſe: il ſuo favore
Non coſtò alla natura alcun portento.

Il Sonno, la Coſtanza, ed il Valore
Fur ſuoi miniſtri; e dell' illuſtre evento
Ti diè il vantaggio, e ti laſciò l'onore.

SON-

SONNET,

TO THE EMPRESS QUEEN.

Ah great Thereſa, what new glories flow
To grace the native ſplendor of thy name!
See the proud Phalanx of the common foe
Subdu'd and ſcatter'd to enhance thy fame!

The cloud of war, big with impending ills,
Threaten'd to blaſt each laurel on thy brow;
Thy truſt was plac'd in God, who gracious wills
Protection to thy ſtate—ſhould man aſk, how?

The ſun was not impeded in his courſe;
Nor did the great abyſs become dry land:
The work was done by human ſkill and force,
Without one Portent from the Almighty hand;

Wiſdom and fortitude, with valour join'd,
The fate of this tremendous day decree;
Theſe Miniſters the way to victory find,
And leave the honour of th' event to Thee.

LETTER XVI.

TO COUNT FLORIO.

You muſt already, my dear Sir, have received a full account from our friend the ABATE FREDDI, of the execution of the com-

commiſſions with which you honoured me; ſo that to ſpeak further on the ſubject is uſeleſs. I congratulate you on the conſtant and happy fecundity of your muſes, who inſtead of diminiſhing in vigour, acquire new ſtrength every day. It has afforded me very great pleaſure to find, that the few perſons here who are capable of producing works of genius, do juſtice to your talents: particularly, our moſt worthy Nuncio, who yeſterday contended with me, who could beſtow the higheſt praiſe on your poem upon *Providence*; which truly abounds with learning, genius, and all the charms of the moſt beautiful poetry. Take care of your health, for the ſake of the Italian Parnaſſus, and believe me, &c.

Vienna, October 22, 1757.

LETTER XVII.

TO THE SAME.

THE confidence, my dear Count, which you have placed in my friendſhip, gives me the greateſt pleaſure. I find by your laſt moſt obliging letter, that you know me ſufficiently not to blame my inability to comply with

your reaſonable requeſt. I am obliged from ſyſtem, temper, want of health, and inexperience in the management of every thing that relates to buſineſs, to live philoſophically by myſelf: I never go to court, unleſs commanded by my ſovereign; and never mix with the ſhining ſatellites of our ſtars of the firſt magnitude, unleſs by accident. In conſequence of this kind of life, whenever any thing that is diſagreeable to me happens, I endeavour to bear it as well as I can, without the hope of aſſiſtance from others. In fact, during the courſe of the preſent war, I have loſt two thouſand two hundred florins, which I had lent; and have not only had my penſion reduced, twelve per cent, but been obliged to receive it in paper; which will not be taken in payment, unleſs at a loſs of another twelve per cent, at leaſt. Add to all this, the numerous new taxes, which are daily impoſed on us here; and judge whether ſuch burthens are not too heavy for the ſhoulders of a poor poet. But notwithſtanding all theſe grievances, being moſt certain that perturbation and complaint would have no effect on the ſyſtem already eſtabliſhed, I ſpare myſelf ſuch uſeleſs labour; *demitto auriculas*

*riculas tanquam iniquæ mentis aſellus**. I obey, and recommend myſelf to providence. But if you could find any one at Vienna more able and more active than me, I am of opinion, that in the preſent ſituation of affairs, it would not be poſſible to obtain attention to ſmall private grievances; and that all the redreſs you could get, would be the referring you to an examination of the deputies at *Goritz* and *Gradiſca*. At theſe places, and not at Vienna, you ſhould therefore ſhew the validity of your reaſons. It is in vain to flatter yourſelf that the bare aſſertions of an individual can overſet the diſpoſitions of an entire deputation. You ſee that I have a fellow-feeling for you, and beg you to believe, that I am extremely mortified at my inſufficiency.

Vienna, Sept. 22, 1759.

* Like vicious Aſs, that fretting bears
A wicked load, I hang my ears.
FRANCIS's Hor. Lib. 1. Sat. 9.

LETTER XVIII.

TO THE SAME.

It appears by your letter, that the ſyſtem of life which I love and have thought neceſſary to adopt, does not meet with your approbation. But before you peremptorily decide, I muſt beg of you, my dear Count, to remember, that you are here only in the pit of the theatre where I ſpend my time; and that your ſituation prevents you from ſeeing all that paſſes on the ſtage, and behind the ſcenes: ſo that you cannot depend on the ſolidity of that reaſoning which has only an illuſion for its baſis. After this, take into the account my natural genius, which from infancy has inclined me to the love of a ſmall ſociety, and the fear of crowds and noiſe, thoſe enemies of the Muſes, among whom it has been my lot to paſs my days. Add to all this, that from the time of my firſt arrival here, I have been convinced that our poetry only pleaſes when it is ſeaſoned with muſic, and interpreted by action: ſo that all the beautiful images, happy expreſſions, elegance

gance of elocution, harmonical charms of our verſification, and other lyrical excellences, are generally unknown here, and conſequently never appreciated, unleſs by a few judicious foreigners *(y)*. You may therefore have obſerved, that during thirty years conſtant reſidence in this country, I have ſuffered all the important events of this period to remain unſung; nor have I ever tuned my Lyre, except in the ſingle inſtance of the ſonnet for the firſt victory that was gained by Marſhal Daun, which I could not decline without incivility, as the taſk was recommended, in caprice, by a great perſon, who thought he was obliging me by the commiſſion. The being uſeful to my brethren, would be the moſt likely motive to make me change my ſyſtem; but you muſt not imagine it to be a very eaſy operation to do it effectually. I am ignorant of more than half the neceſſary ingredients in this recipe, and I abhor the reſt: ſo that if I have not ſucceeded in ſerving others by my own *nugæ canoræ*, I fear that I ſhall go out of the world without fulfilling this firſt duty.

Vienna, February 13, 1760.

(y) It is to be feared, that this, at the Italian Opera, is nearly the caſe in England.

LETTER XIX.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

BESIDES the new dramas, for which I beg you to accept my thanks, I am indebted to you for the account which you have given me of your health, and that of your family; as every thing concerning ſuch an old and affectionate friend is extremely intereſting to me. This tender ſolicitude occaſions frequent trouble to our worthy friend, Count Canale, when much time has elapſed without hearing from you, as was the caſe before the arrival of your laſt letter.

I am very glad that your poet, Sig. *Cigna Santi*, of Turin, has been able to ſucceed in making the ſubject of *Æneas in Latium*, theatrical. I have had it in my mind more than thirty years; and yet, though I often tried, I have never been able to ſee it in a point of view that ſatisfied me. If ever I ſhould be lucky enough to diſcover its theatrical properties, I ſhould perhaps ſtill be induced to work at it, for the ſake of *Dido*.

Take care of your health, my dear friend, and advance in the road through life as we all do, hoping for good, and bearing the bad. Reverence devoutly, in my name, Signor *Bruni*; and believe me to be as much yours, as an old and faithful ſervant ought to be.

Vienna, February 27, 1760.

LETTER XX.

TO THE SAME.

THE approbation which, according to your letter of the 25th of laſt month, has been granted to my ALCIDE AL BIVIO, by your enlightened court and intelligent public, is ſweet flattery. Of your favourable opinion I had no doubt; being certain, that whatever was mine, would be honoured with your ancient propenſity to protect it; which pleaſes me more as a proof of the continuance of your love, than rigid and incorruptible judgment. The moſt dangerous rock of this compoſition, was the rugged and ſevere morality that the ſubject required, to contraſt with the delicate and ſeducing ſentiments which muſt inevitably reign in it. On this account, I was obliged to call in all

the flowers of poetry, and illuſions of repreſentation, and ſhew, to diſguiſe it. Here the artifice has happily ſucceeded; and the public has run after this moral entertainment in greater crowds, at every repreſentation, than at any other opera full of events and paſſions. This is perhaps more a panegyric on the nation, than the author; but at leaſt it is no diſgrace, that my vanity ſhould have ſuch a hook to catch at (z).

Vienna, November 24, 1760.

LETTER XXI.

TO COUNT DANIEL FLORIO.

In expectation of our *Abate Freddi*, I have deferred writing to you in anſwer to your obliging letter of the 20th of July, for

(z) This opera, written for the marriage of the Archduke Joſeph, late Emperor, with the Princeſs Iſabel of Bourbon, was the firſt which Metaſtaſio produced expreſsly for the court of Vienna, ſince the death of the Emperor, Charles VI. It was ſet by Haſſe, who, with the whole celebrated band of Auguſtus II. King of Poland, had quitted Dreſden, on the King of Pruſſia's taking poſſeſſion of it, in 1756.

more

more than a fortnight: but as he has not yet made his appearance, and fearing that the delay ſhould have an appearance of neglect, I can no longer poſtpone informing you of my impatience to read and admire your new poem, which I have no doubt will be worthy of you; and thanking you, moſt gratefully, for the honour you do me in imagining that I intereſt myſelf in your fame, and in that of our Parnaſſus, which are ſo cloſely connected. Indeed I have wiſhed a thouſand times to animate you to undertake ſome heroic poem; not knowing, among our preſent bards, any other who would have breath ſufficient to fill the epic trumpet, and bid defiance to the moſt celebrated and ſonorous champions. It is time that you ſhould vanquiſh your exceſſive modeſty, and launch into a wider ocean. I will be anſwerable for your making new and glorious diſcoveries, and for the rich and valuable merchandize with which you will be freighted at your return. I ſhould utter a thouſand imprecations againſt the obſtacles which prevent your ſailing, if they were leſs ſacred and leſs reaſonable. The inexpreſſible pleaſure of embracing you would be too dearly purchaſed, by the uneaſineſs which your good

heart would ſuffer, in being ſeparated from ſo worthy a companion. I wiſh myſelf this happineſs, without its being embittered by circumſtances which may throw the leaſt ſhade on the perfect idea which I have formed of your character.

You may be certain, my dear Sir, that the enlightened Italians reſident here, are your partial admirers; but good God! how ſmall is their number! I hardly believe they would exceed the number of the graces; but am certain that they would not amount to that of the muſes.

Vienna, Auguſt 20, 1760.

END OF THE FOURTH SECTION.

SECTION V.

LETTER I.

TO THE CAVALIER FARINELLI IN ITALY.

At length I can no longer doubt, my dear Gemello, of your being a ſea monſter. Till now I imagined that the numerous letters I had ſent to you into Spain, by the common poſt, and by Count Roſenburgh, had miſcarried, and flattered myſelf that this was the reaſon of my not hearing from you. At preſent, I hear from all quarters, that you are in Italy, and thank God, in good health; and yet, notwithſtanding this, I have not been remembered by you. I can conceive that the agitation occaſioned by ſo great a criſis in your affairs, and way of life, may have occupied you ſo much as to allow you no time for thinking of all your numerous friends; but I hoped that you reckoned me among the few who would be always attached

tached to you in whatever ſituation the viciſſitudes of fortune may throw you. However your affairs have hitherto gone, or may go, I entreat you to ſettle ſome plan for our future correſpondence; let me know, inſtantly, how you do, and how I ſtand in your thoughts: or if this is incompatible with your preſent plan, at leaſt remember, whenever you ſhall chuſe to enquire after me, that you will find me impreſſed at all times, and on all occaſions with the ſame eſteem, the ſame friendſhip, and the ſame affection as ever.

Vienna, July 31, 1760.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

THE ſatisfaction which you expreſſed in your dear letter of the 21ſt of laſt month, afforded me great conſolation, as I deduced from it the affectionate diſpoſition of your good heart towards me. And I can only ſay in return, that you have the entire poſſeſſion of mine, in the ſame manner as you always poſſeſſed it.

My

My noſe, from which every tribute of gratitude is due, inſiſts on my thanking you for your affectionate attention to its gratification. Our dear and honoured *Carlani*, who reverences and worſhips you, has undertaken, at my requeſt, to regulate with the aſſiſtance of his couſin, the importation of ſnuff: ſo that I now hope it will have an auſpicious paſſage hither.

I have incloſed a letter from our ſecretary of ſtate, and hope it will arrive ſafe at the place of its deſtination.

Your Pilgrimage to the holy chapel (at *Loretta*) pleaſes me, but I cannot diſſemble to you my inability to ſay the ſame of your expreſſion—*and then go on.* I quite underſtand your grateful and reſpectful motives; but am not certain that I comprehend the reſt. I comfort myſelf in knowing that you are prudent, have friends, and are ſure to do nothing raſhly.

You will forgive the anxiety and ſolicitude of your affectionate and ſincere friend.

Vienna, November 3, 1760.

I. E T.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

YOUR moſt welcome letter of the 19th of laſt month, has afforded me great conſolation, both by the new proofs of your affection, and the laudable gratitude which you ſeem to expreſs at the univerſal love and affection with which you have been received, and will doubtleſs continue to enjoy, in the boſom of your numerous and tender family. Indeed my pleaſure would be perfect, if you could aſſure me that you were become more robuſt in body, and more philoſophic in mind. Try, my dear Gemello, at theſe two moſt importants points; that the premium of your honourable and wiſe conduct, may correſpond with that which has rendered you illuſtrious in felicity, when it was much more difficult to preſerve an equilibrium.

Oh that I were allowed to make a third in the long converſation, which I figure to myſelf, between you and our moſt worthy Princeſs of Belmonte! But theſe are dreams and fables which produce nothing but mortification,

tification, at the impoſſibility of realizing them.

Our honoured *Carlani* ſet off, ſuddenly, the firſt day of lent, to my great affliction.

From a wandering planet, I hope you will ſoon become a fixed ſtar. When that happens, pray inform me of your ſphere, that I may know where to point my teleſcope (*a*).

Adieu. Take care of your health, and continue to love your moſt faithful friend and twin.

P. S. The moſt excellent ſnuff, which will be the delight of mine and of many noſes, ready to ſound your praiſes, is arrived. I ſhall carry your compliments to our ſacred Paſtor. Adieu, once more.

Vienna, February 9, 1761.

(*a*) This beautiful metaphor in playful proſe, had been ſtill more beautifully expreſſed in verſe, by our Southern, in his *Oroonoko*; which it is very improbable that Metaſtaſio, who did not underſtand Engliſh, ſhould ever have ſeen.

« Thou God adored! Though ever glorious Sun!
« If ſhe be yet on earth, ſend me a beam
« Of thy all ſeeing pow'r to light me to her;
« Or if thy ſiſter goddeſs has preferr'd
« Her beauty to the ſkies, to be a ſtar,
« Oh tell me where ſhe ſhines, that I may ſtand
« Whole nights and gaze upon her."

LET-

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME, IN BOLOGNA.

YOUR dear letter, of the 17th of July, was only delivered to me three days ago: ſo that my incomparable Gemello will perceive by the date of this, that it has been near a month on the road: Heaven knows by what wicked contrivances ſo much time has been loſt. It is well for us, that our affairs will not be injured by this delay, and that my chief ſolicitude, which was about your health, had been already appeaſed from another quarter. Though I ſhall not obtain the pleaſure of ſeeing and embracing you: yet it is ſome conſolation to me, that we are not quite ſo far from each other: and to make me perfectly eaſy on your account, I long to receive ſome letters from you, in which I ſhall diſcover none of thoſe manifeſt indications of a mind that has not yet quite recovered its tranquillity. I ſhould certainly have condemned you, had you been inſenſible to ſuch an unexpected and afflicting cataſtrophe. Every exceſs is an exceſs; but that

that which ariſes from gratitude, merits not only pity but praiſe. And yet, my dear Gemello, you have already ſuperabundantly given way to the emotions of your feeling heart, and the laws of duty: it is now time to put in practice that ſerene reſignation which enabled you, in the face of the whole world, to give ſo many wonderful proofs of heroic moderation, amidſt the moſt ſeducing flattery of fortune (*b*). Accompliſh this, my dear friend. Settle your domeſtic affairs, a work which you ſay you have begun; and eſtabliſh a placid, wiſe and ſerene tenor of life, in which you may ſweetly paſs all thoſe days which providence has allotted you, in pleaſing occupations among your friends who adore you. Forgive my affection theſe, perhaps too familiar, remonſtrances. The privilege of a twin will I hope authoriſe ſuch liberties: and it is very excuſable that I ſhould wiſh you liberated from ſuch agita-

(*b*) Metaſtaſio, by his frequent repetition of this encomium, ſeems deſirous of ſtimulating his friend to that fortitude of which he now ſo much ſtood in need; having not only been bereaved of his royal Patrons, but driven from that court in which he had been treated with ſuch diſtinction, and ſevered from thoſe friendſhips and habits, which he had enjoyed more than twenty years.

tions as true friendſhip obliges me to partici-pate with you.

Our good Princeſs of Belmonte has frequently written to me, and magnifies the pleaſure which ſhe enjoyed in your company, and the eſteem for you which your amiable character and converſation had encreaſed and confirmed. I envied you both: but we are not born to be perfectly happy.

Our ſacred Paſtor is always in motion, and catching him is not the feat of a common ſportſman. He is at preſent in the country; but I ſhall contrive, at his return, to execute your commiſſion.

I am well in *quantum Metaſtaſiana fragilitas patitur*. I ſhould be much better if I were aſſured of your tranquillity: and if I could convince you of the conſtant affection with which I ſhall eternally be, &c.

Vienna, Auguſt 19, 1761.

LETTER V.

TO COUNT FLORIO.

The light, but frequent, commands of my court, rich in eight or nine angelic Arch-dutcheſſes, all lovers of ſong, added to the irregularity

irregularity of my health, often make me ſeem to neglect the very perſons with whom I am moſt ambitious of being in conſtant correſpondence. From this cauſe, my moſt reſpected Count, is derived the ſlowneſs in anſwering your letter, for which I rather claim compaſſion than pardon, as it is more my misfortune than fault. The great work which you have undertaken, will not bear precipitation. Great travellers do not ride poſt. In ſpite of my impatience, I cannot help approving the wiſe and well ordered leiſure with which you proceed in your glorious enterpriſe. Move ſlow, but never diſcontinue your labour, and I am certain that you will add new ſplendor to our Italian muſes.

Vienna, September, 1760.

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

In the laſt moſt obliging letter with which you have been pleaſed to favour me, all the enviable qualities of your good heart are clearly diſcoverable; theſe it is impoſſible for any one to deny, without injuſtice, and

who wiſhes not to injure his own character. I congratulate you on this amiable diſpoſition, as an excellence extremely rare in theſe times, eſpecially among perſons in that elevated rank of literature to which your cultivation and talents have ſo juſtly exalted you. Continue, dear Sir, to gratify my wiſhes, in honouring the Italian Parnaſſus; and as one of its moſt ancient inhabitants, I ſhall think myſelf obliged to you for that ſplendor which will be reflected by your works, upon all our numerous tribe in common. I am unable to tell you what regret you have left in all thoſe who, during your ſhort reſidence at this court, had the happineſs of enjoying your amiable and learned company.

I am extremely impatient to hear that all Italy echoes your heroic trumpet—

Vienna, January 10, 1761.

Metaſtaſio ſeems, by his prudence, good breeding, and candour, to have been the only poet, of the firſt claſs, in modern times, who enjoyed a long peace with his brethren. The lives of Dryden, Boileau, Pope, and Voltaire, were embittered by perpetual quarrels with

with rival authors; who though not all dunces, were treated as ſuch, indiſcriminately, by theſe impatient and irritable favourites of Apollo. Metaſtaſio, indeed, was ſeldom attacked; but if he had intemperately anſwered the few whoſe envy he had excited, his foes would have been multiplied, and he would have been regarded by his competitors as their common enemy: as his ſuperior excellence was certainly injurious both to their fame and fortune; but by forbearance, urbanity, and a politeneſs which bordered upon flattery to thoſe who ſent him their works, or conſulted him as a critic, he eſcaped all that warfare, which though uſually generated by envy, if not foſtered by arrogance and a vindictive ſpirit, would die in its infancy.

The civility between authors in private letters, is no more to be underſtood literally, than the humility of the great, when they ſay to a tradeſman: "Your humble ſervant, Sir." Metaſtaſio, fond of quiet, and unwilling to diſquiet others, when conſulted by authors, which from his great celebrity frequently happened, treated them with ſuch candour and lenity, as were conſtrued into approbation; all, indeed, that conſulting authors

uſually want. Whether this was the caſe of the writer to whom the two following letters are addreſſed, I know not; but his merit muſt have been very great, or his modeſty little, if he was not flattered by their contents.

LETTER VII.

TO SIG. MARIO COMPAGNONI.

'YOUR moſt obliging letter of the 8th of laſt month, with which I was unexpectedly honoured, gives me ſo advantageous and amiable an idea both of your diſpoſition and cultivated talents, that the pleaſure I feel at the acquiſition of ſo valuable a friend, leaves me no time for remorſe, at having uſurped ſuch exceſſive eſteem and benevolence.

I find in your proſe as well as verſe, beſides the elegance and felicity of your ſtyle, that uncommon choice and connexion of ideas, in which even writers the moſt celebrated, ſeldom abound. This can only be the child of that perfect judgment which ſeems ſymbolized in Apollo, as talents are in

in the muſes: and I am firmly perſuaded, that nothing great can be produced by the latter, without the maſterly guidance of the former. Upon ſuch a ſolid foundation, I build my hopes, that you will ſoon become a new ornament to the literature of Italy; and I feel as much vanity as gratitude in having been the ſubject, however barren, of your firſt poetical eſſays.

Vienna, January 3, 1760.

LETTER VIII.

TO THE SAME.

I ALWAYS feel delighted and honoured by your letters, particularly when ſome new compoſition flatters my vanity in fulfilling my predictions, and germinating freſh hopes of your future poetical fame.

The beautiful cantata which you have written on the night of our Saviour's birth, is the more worthy of praiſe, for partaking leſs of the diſadvantage of a ſubject ſo frequently treated. The language is flowing, without loſing its dignity. The images are pleaſing and poetical, and there reigns

through the whole, a judgment, without which, as I ſaid in a former letter, I ſet little value on the admirable faculties of the moſt happy talents. I congratulate you ſincerely on your ſucceſs, and exhort you to continue to delight in the commerce of the muſes, who ſmile on you with ſo much partiality.

Vienna, February 13, 1761.

Metaſtaſio ſeems to manifeſt ſome diſpleaſure at the public uſe which a writer mentioned in the following letter, had made of the politeneſs with which he had treated him in a private correſpondence.

LETTER IX.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

TESTIMONIES of the conſtant friendſhip of my much loved Sig. Filipponi, are always, extremely dear to me; for my eſteem and affection for him, being conſtantly alive, and preſent to my mind, the proofs which I receive of ſuch a kind return, cannot be indifferent to me.

What

What *cacoethes* could have ſtimulated the author of *Almeria* to publiſh my letter concerning his drama, and the dedication to it, in ſpite of my moſt ſerious remonſtrance that he would ſuppreſs ſo diabolical a temptation, I know not. That you may not ſuppoſe, for a moment, that I ſhould be delighted with ſuch incenſe, I incloſe the copy of a letter which I wrote to the author, to diſſuade him from any ſuch deſign; but you ſee that I have no reaſon to be flattered with the efficacy of my eloquence.

TO SIG. COLTELLINI AT LEGHORN.

FROM the great hopes which your happy talents had inſpired, in the peruſal of ſome of your beautiful poems, particularly the laſt, written on the Nuptials of our Arch Duke, I rejoice to find that you have ſo far ſubdued your diffidence, as to put on the buſkin, and try to add freſh ornaments to our theatre. The ſea is certainly ſtormy and difficult; but as far as we may venture to predict of that dexterity and intelligence which has not hitherto ventured to quit the ſhore, you ſeem in poſſeſſion of all that is neceſſary for the

enterprize; and I am impatient to join my approbation to that of the public; but if it was the premium for a dedication, it would too much diminiſh its value. Such a ſpecies of incenſe does not belong to a commerce among the inhabitants of Parnaſſus, and by immemorable preſcription, is only due to the ſplendid ſons of fortune with whom I never have had, nor am ambitious of having, any affinity. I confeſs myſelf much obliged by your partiality, but it would be extremely injudicious, if you began your career with the bad auſpices of a uſeleſs, or rather, a hurtful irregularity. Abandon therefore this idea, and afford me a fitter opportunity of publicly declaring myſelf your panegyriſt, as I already have done in private. *

Vienna, March 9, 176[illegible].

Preſent a thouſand compliments in my name to the learned advocate *Bruni*; and add, that neither *Count Canale* nor myſelf have waited for a ſtimulus to forward the ſale of his golden book; but we are too much confirmed in our former opinion, that this ſoil is not favourable to literature. Of ſix copies which Count Canale ſent for, none

* Thus far was addreſſed to Sig. Coltellini, what follows is the concluſion of the bard's letter to Sig. Filipponi.

are

are diſpoſed of, except thoſe which he preſented to his friends; and two copies, which I left on return in the hands of an eminent bookſeller, in ſpite of all our preaching, remain very quietly on the counter. If they were French romances for the improvement of the minds, and mending the morals of our young gentlemen and ladies, they would have enriched the bookſeller. What a happy age!

Vienna, Auguſt 17, 1761.

TO MONSIEUR BELLOY.

I HOPE, Sir, that you will not aſcribe the late arrival of my anſwer to your moſt obliging letter, and thanks for your courteous preſent of *Titus*, either to neglect or want of eſteem. The frequent poetical commiſſions of our court, rich with moſt amiable and accompliſhed princeſſes, all lovers of muſic; the neceſſity of frequent peruſals of the drama with which I have been favoured, previous to the anſwering your letter; and the great uncertainty of my health, have deprived me of that leiſure which I wiſhed to dedicate to genius and friendſhip. Stimulated more

more by duty than convenience, I now ſteal a few moments from my unimportant, though inevitable, avocations.

As there was a neceſſity for accomodating yourſelf to the genius of your nation, in treating the ſubject of *Titus* ſo differently from me, it is a matter of pure generoſity in you to aſcribe to me any part of the merit of a tragedy which, in your hands, is become original. Painters would almoſt all become copyiſts, if this title were given to every one who was not the firſt to paint the death of Abel, the ſacrifice of Abraham, or any other event. Incidents, ſimilarity of ſentiment, and human paſſions, are in common, and reſemble each other like our minds, which are the more apt to think alike, in proportion to their being natural. And, with the aſſiſtance of leiſure and pedantry, I could adduce an infinite number of examples of the greateſt ancient and modern poets, who, under ſimilar circumſtances, have been obliged to uſe the ſame thoughts and expreſſions. This truth will render me unworthy of the ſecond praiſe which you have been ſo obliging as to beſtow upon me, of having ingeniouſly, and with wonderful art, adapted French tragedies to the Italian ſtage; at leaſt I can venture

to

to ſay with truth, that this is what I never intended. Having peruſed the beſt dramatic productions of other countries, I always meant to write originally. And if the circumſcribed condition of our natures, or a memory, too faithful in retaining ſuch things as it had received with admiration and pleaſure, has ſuggeſted to me beauties which I had read before upon ſimilar occaſions; ſuppoſing I was the inventor of them, I had taken the credit to myſelf: and whenever I have diſcovered the contrary, I thought there was ſome merit in the ſelection and uſe of the precious materials which the moſt illuſtrious miners had ſupplied, and I ſhould have been aſhamed of my weakneſs, if I had been induced to relinquiſh the beſt, for the childiſh vanity of inventing ſomething different.

But this digreſſion is already too long for a letter haſtily written, and for that reaſon I ſhall exerciſe your patience no further on the ſubject.

I therefore proceed to tell you, that I have read your tragedy ſeveral times, and always with equal pleaſure. The ſtyle is ſo harmonious, noble, clear, and full of uncommon thoughts, as convince me, that the bounty of nature has been happily ſeconded by application

cation and ſtudy. You ſhould not therefore, with ſuch a rich capital, give way to the capricious inſults of theatrical viciſſitudes. You cannot be ignorant that the ſame tempeſts have in every age agitated the firſt luminaries of dramatic poetry; but the ſtorm ceaſes, while merit remains, and is rendered more bright and illuſtrious by time *(b)*. I take a part

(b) This tranſlated and unſucceſsful drama, was the author's firſt attempt. It was brought on the ſtage at Paris, in 1758. The *Seige of Calais* in 1765, ſeems to have been the only one of Belloy's tragedies, that was crowned with full and unequivocal ſucceſs. The King of France honoured him with a gold medal, weighing twenty-five Louis d'or, beſides a conſiderable preſent, in money. The magiſtrates of Calais, ſent him the freedom of their town, in a gold box; and placed his picture in the town hall, among their benefactors. Such teſtimonies of gratitude, were due to a poet who, by a national and hiſtorical event, had the power to awaken ſuch unbounded patriotic enthuſiaſm, in ſpite of the incorrect and harſh verſification and bombaſt, of which his countrymen in their cooler moments, have accuſed him. But notwithſtanding his defects, juſtice ought to be rendered to the bold and impaſſioned ſtrokes, the noble and generous ſentiments, and pathetic ſituations, which contributed to the extraordinary ſucceſs of *the Seige of Calais*.

With reſpect to his failure, in imitating *La Clemenza di Tito* of Metaſtaſio, a drama for muſic, and a drama for declamation, are ſuch different things, that a good *opera*, without

a part, however, in your juſt complaints. Indeed the partiality which you profeſs for me, your diſtinguiſhed talents, and the ſimilitude of the riſk we run in ſailing on the ſame ſea, renders it a duty; but I wiſh that the obſtacles which you encounter, as generally happens to great minds, may accelerate, not impede, your progreſs.

With reſpect to the incidents and conduct of our tragedy, I have only to ſay, that if I had imagined any other would have been more likely to ſatisfy the genius of my nation, I ſhould certainly have preferred it to that which I adopted: ſo that it is clear I ſaw no further. You have doubtleſs had the ſame end in deviating from me: that is, of flattering the French taſte. I know that your genius and theatrical experience ought to

out many changes and additions, will always be a bad tragedy; and the moſt excellent tragedy, without compreſſion, an inſupportable opera. In tragedy, amplification is not only allowable, but neceſſary to diſplay the powers of poetry and eloquence, as well as to diſcriminate characters, and paint paſſion. In an opera, the narrative muſt be ſhort, the incidents numerous and rapid in ſucceſſion, the diction rather ſweet and flowing, than ſtrong and nervous: as the words of an air ſhould merely ſerve as an outline for melody to colour.

have enabled you to judge *(c)*; but it would have been too arrogant in me, who am ignorant of the cuſtoms, prejudices, and way of thinking of your countrymen, to dare to propoſe my own. It is extremely falſe, that a young German officer ever ſent, or ſhewed me as his own, the ſketch of your tragedy of *Titus*. I am acquainted with no officer of this nation, who writes French verſe. So that thoſe who have irritated you by ſuch a fable, have either done it through miſtake, or malice. Be not therefore diſturbed by phantoms which have no exiſtence; but courageouſly continue to make uſe of your talents, and of the ſolid and noble ſtyle to which you are naturally prone; and I have no doubt, but that you will add to your nation's glory, and acquire thoſe laurels which I have predicted, and of which I ſincerely wiſh you in poſſeſſion.

Vienna, April 30, 1761.

(c) Belloy began his dramatic career by being an actor.

LETTER X.

TO FATHER JOHN BAPTIST MARTINI, MAESTRO DI CAPELLA.

YOUR extreme readineſs to oblige, reverend Sir, correſponds with the other admirable qualities by which you are ſo much diſtinguiſhed. The young female compoſer, who ſent you ſome ſpecimens of her ſtudies, was only ambitious of your corrections and advice; but you have been pleaſed to honour her with your approbation and praiſe. They will however inſpire her with an ardent wiſh to merit them in future, in availing herſelf of the maſterly notes which you have ſo kindly ſent her for guides; and which ſufficiently ſhew, that the author of them has been able to unite, in a moſt uncommon manner, profound ſcience with humanity and grace *(d)*.

When

(d) This female ſtudent, who had ſent her compoſitions to *Padre Martini*, was the accompliſhed *Mademoiſelle Martinetz*, the daughter of a friend of Metaſtaſio, in whoſe houſe he reſided from his firſt arrival at Vienna, till his death.

When you kindly honour me with the precious gift of the firſt volume of your hiſtory of muſic, be pleaſed to conſign it to the care of our worthy and amiable friend *Sig. Carlani*, whom I have requeſted to tranſmit it to me by the firſt favourable opportunity. In the mean time, I entreat you to honour me with your commands, and to believe me to be, with due reſpect and gratitude, &c.

Vienna, March 9, 1761.

death. She had been educated by the Poet, and her virtues and talents, in riper years, amply rewarded the pains which her illuſtrious tutor had taken in cultivating them. See *Germ. Tour.* Vol. 1. Article Vienna.

The admirable Dr. *Haydn*, in the beginning of his career, and previous to his great celebrity, was the muſic-maſter of *Mademoiſelle Martinetz*, reſiding, during three years, under the ſame roof as Metaſtaſio, from whom this great muſician himſelf received inſtructions in the Italian language, and the adapting melody to its accents. It was about this time, that he obtained a few leſſons in ſinging from the celebrated Porpora: in whoſe favour Metaſtaſio wrote ſo eloquent and pathetic a petition to Farinelli. See Letter XIII. Sect. IV. of this vol.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

I DID not anſwer your laſt moſt obliging letter, till I had made enquiry after the muſical manuſcripts in the Imperial library. Yeſterday I received an account of them, which to-day I religiouſly incloſe.

I have written no other drama for the nuptials of our arch-duke, than *Alcide al Bivio*. There is now performing, a ſerenata intitled *Thetis*, written by *Sig. Migliavacca*, a poet in the ſervice of the King of Poland, which has great merit. In the courſe of the carnival, will be performed in the public theatre, a little opera called *Armida*, imitated from the French, and from my *Iſſipile*, by the ſame poet. My *Alcide* therefore, with *Tetide* and *Armida*, will be delivered to you by the courier of *Count Alberti*, who ſets off in a few days for Florence, and will then paſs on to Bologna.

I am impatient to admire your book; though, as I have not been initiated in the myſteries of harmony, or at leaſt but ſlightly,

I ſhall judge of it as a blind man does of colours.

My avocations will not allow me to lengthen this letter: I therefore haſten to preſent to you, the reſpects of our female compoſer, who animated by your approbation, works inceſſantly at her maſs, and beg you to believe me to be, with the higheſt and moſt perfect eſteem, &c.

Vienna, May 4, 1761.

LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

THE baggage of the Duke of *St. Elizabeth* being at length arrived, yeſterday I was put in poſſeſſion of the firſt volume of your hiſtory of muſic, which you have ſo obligingly ſent me. I haſtily, and with avidity, ran over the dedication, preface, and ſome of the firſt chapters, and thus far can congratulate myſelf with the author, having been highly pleaſed with the idea of the enterpriſe, the ſtyle, and the rich eruditi[illegible]ith which the book muſt neceſſarily [illegible]nd; but I very much fear that you will ſoon plunge

plunge ſo deep into ſcience, that I, poor profane mortal, not inſtructed in the harmonical arcana, ſhall for my ſins be in Egyptian darkneſs, and equally incapable of being pleaſed, or of judging. Notwithſtanding this danger, I ſhall ardently proceed in the peruſal, as I have long been daily accuſtomed to meet with many things of which I am utterly ignorant. In the mean time, I beg of you to accept of my moſt grateful thanks for ſo precious a gift, and wiſhing I may ever be able to make a ſufficient return, I remain, &c.

Vienna, July 17, 1761.

LETTER XIII.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

In the midſt of the hurry and tumult of producing a new and premature drama, I cannot forget my dear *Filipponi*. The opera was hardly out of the preſs, ere I folded a copy of it, in a ſheet of paper ornamented with your name, and conſigned it to our good *Count Canale*, who aſſured me that he ſhould find a ſpeedy conveyance for it. I

was glad of this expedient, as our poſt-office exacts 1 *i pauli* for the carriage of a ſingle copy; a ſum which becomes too enormous for a poor poet to ſuſtain, particularly in time of war, when multiplied by a numerous correſpondence. My letter would be longer, but I am ſo deeply in debt to other friends, that I muſt conclude with a haſty embrace.

Vienna, May 10, 1762.

LETTER XIV.

TO THE SAME.

WHETHER my CLELIA was handſome or ugly, I reckoned myſelf ſure of your favour, by right of preſcription, and was much pleaſed with your praiſes, as a certain indication of your obſtinate affection for the ſtage; a poſſeſſion which I eagerly wiſh to have confirmed, even in the midſt of ſecurity (*e*).

(*e*) The opera of CLELIA was written by command, and firſt repreſented at the court of Vienna, before their Imperial majeſties, on the birth day of her ſerene Royal Highneſs, the Arch-dutcheſs Iſabella of Bourbon, in 1762; it was ſet to muſic by Haſſe. This princeſs died of the ſmall-pox, the year after.

I muſt,

I muſt, however, confeſs to you, my dear friend, that toying with the muſes at preſent, is very fatiguing, and dries up all my radical moiſture. I want patience to bear with their caprice, and am not very greedy of their favours. Almoſt ten volumes of nonſenſe, ought to be a ſufficient doſe for an honeſt man. My buſkins are worn out; others will come with new trappings to awaken the appetite of drowſy readers. *Signor Pugnani* called upon me on his arrival at Vienna, but I was not ſo fortunate as to ſee him; nor did I know of his departure. *Count Canale* muſt have been equally ignorant of it, for having the ſame wiſh as myſelf, of tranſmitting *Clelia* to you, he has been, like me, obliged to ſend it by the common carrier.

Vienna, July 19, 1762.

LETTER XV.

TO THE SAME.

FROM your moſt grateful letter of laſt month, I have a new confirmation of the affectionate part which you always take in

every thing that concerns me. I am extremely obliged to you for the ſteps which you have already taken, that *Sig. Bartoli* may not expoſe me, by exceſſive partiality, to the riſk of paſſing for a ſatirical poet, and with perſons of high rank, to whom only the characters of tragedy can bear any reſemblance. Men are men in every ſtation; and yet the moſt cautious writers are in perpetual danger of offending, by a caſual likeneſs in ſome unhappy feature, without the leaſt intention of making his character the portrait of an individual. I ſhould however be extremely ſorry if *Sig. Bartoli*, not convinced of the ſolidity of my reaſoning, ſhould be angry at my not being ſenſible of the honour intended me; an accuſation which would afflict me the more, as I feel myſelf leſs deſerving of it. You will therefore do me a moſt eſſential ſervice, if you can prevent me from ſplitting upon this rock, while I try to ſteer clear of the other.

The muſes, whether willingly or unwillingly, have ſupplied my wants, and I have already ſent them back to Parnaſſus, to obtain a new benediction from father Apollo. I muſt not at preſent tell you, what obliges me to have further dealings with theſe harlots,

lots, having been enjoined ſilence by a ſovereign command; when my mouth ſhall be opened, you will know more.

Vienna, October 14, 1762.

LETTER XVI.

TO THE SAME.

You were exact, my dear friend, in foretelling when you wrote laſt, that my new opera had not yet been repreſented. The actreſſes are too great perſonages, and for that reaſon more expoſed to accidents. We are overſet by them already, the illneſs of one or another, ſtill continuing; ſo that we know not when we ſhall begin, though the poetry and muſic have long been ready.

Vienna has been in a conſtant fermentation with balls, operas and plays (*f*); and yet during the whole carnival, I have never ſeen the door of the theatre, nor heard a fiddle ſcrape. *Quod Deus bene vertat*; ſo you ſee, that our taſtes coincide. Give a chaſte embrace for me to the moſt reſpected prieſteſs, and believe me *ex corde*.

Vienna, March 7, 1763.

(*f*) Theſe muſt have been on occaſion of the peace with Pruſſia.

LETTER XVII.

TO THE SAME.

LONG life to my dear Filipponi! your friendly attention in ſeconding ſo diligently my ſolicitude concerning the arrival and ſtate of health of *Count Canale* and his houſehold, is worthy of a friend who knows every motion of my heart, like one of its ancient inhabitants. I am extremely grateful to you for it, and beg of you to continue this moſt obliging office; the rather, as I abſtain from embarraſſing the travellers with uſeleſs trouble, that I may not oblige *Count Canale*, through courteſy, to waſte his precious moments in anſwering letters purely officious. The Counteſs of *Canale* had already a due canonical account, but is extremely pleaſed with a repetition of it, as however ſuperabundant the accounts may be, they will never be in equilibrium with her anxiety; therefore I thank you again in her name.

I beg of you to make a thouſand reſpectful and affectionate compliments for me to the moſt worthy count, aſſuring him that if

he

he does not ſoon return to the forſaken Lyceum, he will find that illuſtrious babling ſociety which he has left in the hands of *Sig. Hagen* and me, quite abandoned. Adieu.

Vienna, October 30, 1763.

LETTER XVIII.

TO THE SAME.

THE letters of my dear Sig. Filipponi, beſides the intrinſic value which they always have in my eſtimation, are now rendered ſtill more intereſting by the tidings they contain of our moſt reſpected *Count Canale* and the amiable *Canaletti.* I am extremely grateful for your letter of laſt month, and entreat you to continue your friendly complacency, in conſtantly gratifying my impatient and affectionate ſolicitude.

After uſual expreſſions of reſpect and kindneſs, tell him in my name, that I congratulate him on the admirable ſtate of health which his ample and flouriſhing family enjoys here, not forgetting the two laſt tender ſhoots, who have fought like heroes, and ſubdued the ſmall-pox, which this

year

year has been very tremendous in Auſtria, and of which we have had but too ſorrowful a proof in the loſs of our beloved Arch-dutcheſs Iſabella, a ſtroke with which we are ſtill ſtunned.

You may eaſily imagine how much I ſigh for the return of my dear *Count Canale*; but take care not to ſpeak to him on the ſubject. I, who know his heart, am certain what he muſt ſuffer from being conſtrained to quit Vienna, and leave ſo many pledges behind him: as well as the being obliged to remain at Turin, ſo far from a Patron, who unites in ſo uncommon a manner, the majeſty of a ſovereign, with the tenderneſs of a father and a friend.

Vienna, December 5, 1763.

Metaſtaſio, who had been under no neceſſity of importuning the muſes for favours of great importance, during the war of 1756, was called upon, about this time, to furniſh ſeveral dramas for his court.

Alcide al Bivio, ſet by Haſſe, 1760, for the nuptials of the Archduke Joſeph, afterwards Emperor, with the Princeſs *Iſabella of Bourbon*. *Clelia*, ſet likewiſe by Haſſe, 1762, for

for the ſafe delivery of the ſame Princeſs. *L'Atenaide ovver gli affetti generoſi*; written alſo in 1762, by command of their Imperial majeſties, and ſet by *Bonno*, in order to be repreſented in the apartments of the Imperial palace, by five Arch-dutcheſſes: *Maria Iſabella of Bourbon*, firſt conſort of the late Emperor Joſeph; *Marianne*, afterwards dutcheſs of Saxon-Teſchen, *Mary Elizabeth*; and *Mary Amelia*, afterwards dutcheſs of Parma. But this projected plan was rendered abortive, by the deceaſe of the Archdutcheſs Iſabella of Bourbon, who died of the ſmall-pox. Beſides theſe dramas, Metaſtaſio furniſhed the court with ſeveral ſhort occaſional lyric compoſitions, which were called *complimenti*, and ſet by *Haſſe*, *Gluck*, or *Wagenſeil*.

At this time all the ſons and daughters of Apollo in Italy, were ambitious of Metaſtaſio's acquaintance: the modeſt and diffident wiſhed to avail themſelves of his council; the vain, of his praiſe. Our author's candid and pacific diſpoſition inclined him to treat them all with lenity. His diſapprobation was accompanied with ſuch politeneſs, that it was eaſy for ſelf-love to conſtrue it into panegyric. His correſpondence with a literary lady

lady of rank, at Siena, may ſerve as a ſpecimen of his critical urbanity. Some letters ſeem to have paſſed between them, previous to thoſe which appear in the collection: as the firſt in which he ſpeaks of the lady's partial friendſhip is ſhort, and only an accompaniment to the preſent of the poet's opera of *Clelia*.

LETTER XIX.

TO THE NOBLE SIGNORA LIVIA ACCARIGI, PATRICIAN OF SIENA.

THE tribute, rather than gift, of my *Clelia*, was undeſerving of the exceſſive recompenſe of ſuch an obliging and partial letter, as that with which you have deigned to honour me. I feel extremely proud of it, not indeed as a proof of the excellence of my drama, but as a teſtimony of that uncommon friendſhip which has ſeduced your judgment. Continue, moſt illuſtrious lady, to honour your ſex and Italy with your laudable ſtudies, and believe me to be impreſſed with the higheſt eſteem and reſpect, &c.

Vienna, July 14, 1762.

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LETTER XX.

TO THE SAME.

I WAS greatly aſtoniſhed to find in your laſt moſt obliging letter, that among the many excellencies by which you are diſtinguiſhed, there ſhould be that of an exemplary docility, a virtue ſo little known in Parnaſſus. I congratulate you, Madam, upon it, and deſire that it may be propogated in our colleges, where only its maſk can be found, and where every one begs applauſe, in aſking for correction.

You will greatly improve your drama, by making the character of *Thomyris* more decided and conſtant. Indeed the moſt vicious part of an audience, is always pleaſed with examples of magnanimity; I ſhould therefore ſuppreſs that generoſity which Thomyris manifeſts towards the end, and ſtudy from the beginning, and through the whole drama, to make her think, ſpeak, and act in ſuch a manner, that there ſhould be no inconſiſtence in her becoming generous. Let her be proud and vindictive, if you pleaſe; but

but let her not accompliſh her vengeance by a moſt premeditated aſſaſſination, nor loſe her paſſion for ſuch deeds when committed. The Hyrcanian becomes more harſh, inſolent and proud, without principles of morality, or civilization. But his irregularities affect only himſelf, rendering him a diſtinct character, by extravagances that are even ridiculous, as far as the dignity of the buſkin will allow; yet theſe extravagances are never of ſuch a kind, as reduce the other perſonages, either to the neceſſity of bearing unreaſonable ſufferings and paſſing for cowards, or of puniſhing, tragically, the ſavage follies of ignorance and brutality.

Now, deſcending to the minutia of all the events and occaſions which may be imagined, in ſupport of your two principal characters, would be fettering your fancy; of which it is my wiſh to indicate the points at which you are to aim, but not to limit your choice of ſuch means as are moſt ſuitable to your genius, in the proſecution of your plan.

I have made diligent enquiry of my recollection, in order to diſcover ſome trace of the two odes, of which you imagine I muſt have been ſometime in poſſeſſion, through your kindneſs; and think I can ſafely affirm,

affirm, that I have never ſeen them: if by accident, theſe tranſcripts had been miſlaid, I am very certain that I ſhould never have loſt the remembrance of any production of yours.

Continue to honour me with your enviable partiality, and with ſuch commands as may afford me an opportunity of manifeſting with how much reſpect I am, &c.

Vienna, October, 1763.

LETTER XXI.

TO THE SAME.

I ACKNOWLEDGE, with gratitude equal to the ſingular confidence with which you honour me, the having received and attentively peruſed your manuſcript of Thomyris; and am proud that Italy can boaſt a young lady of ſuch rare talents, and who is capable of undertaking one of the moſt difficult enterpriſes which the inhabitants of Parnaſſus dare attempt. I have found the diction clear and happy, and frequent inſtances of ſuch theatrical diſtreſs, as is uſually neither the fruit of learning nor talents, but of long experience. I have found characters drawn with

vigour, and, in ſhort, the whole work has ſurpaſſed my expectation, as it muſt that of every one who knows the enormous difficulty of ſuch a perilous buſineſs, and is not ignorant of this being the firſt time that you have ſailed in an ocean that is rendered terrible by ſuch innumerable ſhipwrecks. I therefore congratulate you; and think, that there is no literary undertaking in which I may not promiſe ſucceſs to your laudable application, and cultivated and diſtinguiſhed talents.

You muſt not expect me, madam, to write a formal academic diſcourſe, defining all the conſtituent parts of the drama. This would be a treatiſe which I ſhould have no time to write, or you patience to read. Indeed it would be a uſeleſs undertaking: as I could tell you nothing of which you may not be informed by my dear friend the *Abate Paſquini*; a man who has done honour to the Italian ſtage, who is your friend as well as mine, and from his perfect knowledge of my heart and mind, can tell you as well as myſelf, what I think and what I feel.

But that you may not doubt of the attention with which I have read your drama, or

think

think me more forward than I ought to be, take the two following obſervations.

Thomyris, at the end of the piece, is full of great, virtuous, and magnanimous ſentiments; but at the beginning ſhe meditates, determines, and orders, an aſſaſſination. This ſeems a duplicity of character as repugnant to rule, as two-fifths in muſic. It is true that there are in nature, devout raſcals, and bluſtering cowards; but they are inſufferable, and our theatre requires decided characters.

The principal feature in the character of *Ircano* appears to me violent; not becauſe brutality does not ſuit his diſpoſition, but being called a coward by the general, he remains *ſuch*, unleſs he kills or is killed by him in a duel. It is true, that the Spaniſh point of honour did not ſubſiſt in the time of Thomyris; but common prejudices muſt be reſpected; and this is one of our moſt inconvenient ſervitudes.

Be careful of your health, for the honour of your ſex, and believe me to be, with equal eſteem and reſpect, &c.

We ſhall now reſume Metaſtaſio's correſpondence with his friend FARINELLI, whom he very anxiouſly tries to moralize into philoſophy and tranquillity, if not comfort. He had been driven out of Paradiſe, that is, ordered to quit Spain, on the acceſſion of Charles III, and ſeemed to wiſh to ſpend the reſt of his days in his native city of Naples, among his relations; but for political reaſons, that comfort was denied him. He had then thoughts of ſettling in England; but that was not agreeable to the court of Spain, as the two nations were then at war. After viſiting ſeveral cities in Italy, in order to chuſe a future abode, Bologna was preſcribed to him, as the place which would give the leaſt umbrage to the Spaniſh monarch; ſeemingly, becauſe Farinelli had fewer acquaintance, and was likely to paſs his time there in a more gloomy and comfortleſs manner, than any where elſe. This, beſides his ſincere affliction for the loſs of his royal patrons, and the importance which his talents and conduct had acquired him at Madrid, rendered leſſons of reſignation difficult to learn: to reconcile the mind to ſuch misfortunes and mortifications, was a work of years; but for

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the recovery of its former tone of happineſs, life was too ſhort!

LETTER XXII.

TO FARINELLI.

THE dear and amiable bearer of this letter, goes into Italy with a firm reſolution, vigouroufly to attack your obſtinate melancholy:—a work worthy of a good and true friend. I envy him, and ſhould be glad to accompany him, as an ally in ſo meritorious an enterpriſe. Let him have his way, my dear friend, and never let it enter into your head to protect your internal foe. You have given proofs ſufficient of your good heart, and ſenſe of gratitude and duty; it is time to reſign yourſelf to the will of Providence, and to diſpel the clouds which obſcure every comfort of life. So prays your moſt affectionate and faithful Gemello.

Vienna, January 17, 1763.

LETTER XXIII.

TO THE SAME.

OUR honoured *Abate Cetrulo* ſets off ſuddenly for Italy; and aſſures me, that his firſt buſineſs will be the viſiting the incomparable Gemello: ſo that I ſhould believe myſelf to be excommunicated in *bulla cœnæ*, if I did not avail myſelf of this opportunity to embrace you affectionately *per procuratorem*, at leaſt a hundred times. I likewiſe ſend a good doſe of friendſhip to our dear *Petrillo*: to whom I acknowledge myſelf extremely obliged for the care he takes in keeping up your ſpirits; of which I diſcovered more than one indication in your anſwer to the letter which I conſigned to his care. I now begin to diſcover that my beloved CARLUCCIO is as ſuperior to the frowns, as he has hitherto been to the ſmiles, of fortune. I promiſed myſelf this heroiſm from you: and was certain that your greateſt difficulty was *knowing how to ſet bounds* to the tender exceſſes of your good heart, and gratitude. Now time and reflection have rendered you maſter

maſter of yourſelf, it is fit, my dear friend, that you ſhould enjoy that ſweet tranquillity, which is ſo juſtly due to your toils and conduct.

We have here, for ſome months, our worthy and excellent *Panzacchi*, who has been called from Bavaria to ſing in the Vienna Theatre. I have always eſteemed him; but, at preſent, love him more than ever; aſſuring myſelf every moment, that he was a long time witneſs of your friendſhip and affection for me (*g*). I never doubted of it, and yet it pleaſes and flatters me to meet with any one that can confirm it. He commiſſions me to preſent a thouſand reſpects to you. Imagine to yourſelf how I muſt teaze and peſter him with queſtions concerning your perſon.

I beg that you, who are full of humanity, will examine a little our *Cetrulo*, concerning the objects of his journey to Naples. It ſeems to me as if he were going to ruin himſelf. I have preached, but in vain. Do you perform the pious work of perſuation.

Adieu, my ever dear Charles.

Vienna, April 26, 1763.

(*g*) See *Preſent State of Muſic in Germany*, vol. 1. art. MUNICH, for a further account of this performer.

LETTER XXIV.

TO THE SAME.

HEAVEN bleſs my dear Gemello, for having at length drawn his head out of that hypochondriac ſlough of deſpair, in which it has ſo long been plunged! The laſt letter which I received from you, after your little excurſion to Parma, and the accounts I have had from *Petrillo*, whom I ſaw a few days ago in his way to Saxony, have afforded me infinite conſolation. I was going to tell you, that you had, at length, ſuffered that reaſon to be vanquiſhed, which had been your conſtant guide in the midſt of all the powerful allurements of fortune: allurements which in every age have turned the heads of the wiſeſt men, though double baked in the oven of philoſophy. Now my dear Gemello is victorious, I hope he will take advantage of the victory. That he will eſtabliſh ſuch a ſerene and tranquil way of life, as ſhall enable him to enjoy that peace to which Providence conſents; and convince the world, that

that he is ſtill the ſame FARINELLI, in every ſituation.

Our *Menghino*, who has always your name in his mouth, is here very juſtly eſteemed. I ſee him daily, and take great care not to let him indulge his natural fantaſtic imaginations, in which I find him much mended: but not quite cured.

You muſt already know, that here we are become Neapolitans, *in verbo terremoto*. In the morning of the vigil of St. Peter, a little before and a little after five o'clock, we felt, in Vienna, two reaſonably violent ſhocks: and afterwards an account was brought from Hungary, of the total ruin of the city of Komorren, and other places in its neighbourhood. If the Neapolitans ſend us their earthquakes, it is to be hoped that they will likewiſe ſend us their figs, grapes, ſurrento veal, exquiſite pork, and all the other good things of which we are in want; but it is quite unchriſtian to ſend us only the bad.

I love and eſteem our dear *Carlani*, as much as his honourable and truſty character deſerves; and rejoice extremely that you know his worth, and have him ſo near you. For, to tell you the truth, your good heart always makes me tremble, knowing how

much it has been abuſed in former times. Be cautious, my dear friend; and when you have found an honeſt man, take him to your boſom as a great treaſure; for this vale of tears in which we live, does not produce them in great abundance.

God help that obſtinate head of *Cetrulo!* I have great fears that he goes about ſeeking ills, like the phyſicians. Farewell, dear Gemello; perſevere in your melioration, till you are perfectly cured; and your entire mental health will contribute infinitely to that of your moſt faithful Gemello.

Vienna, June 11, 1763.

LETTER XXV.

TO THE SAME.

On Friday, the 9th inſtant, in the duſk of the evening, arrived at Vienna, the very obliging Sig. *Paſquali Potenza*; on Saturday, and yeſterday, he favoured me with a viſit, and to-day he ſet out early for Prague. His manners and converſation prove him to be no gooſe, and that he knows the world.

I have

I have no doubt of his profeſſional merit; his reputation, and your venerable opinion are ſufficient for me; but I have not yet had the pleaſure of hearing him (*b*). I could not help expreſſing a wiſh for that gratification; but he excuſed himſelf, by ſaying that his voice was out of order, not being recovered from the effects of his journey; and I was unwilling to preſs him, under ſuch circumſtances. Yeſterday, he dined out of town, at the villa of Count *Durazzo*, and on being ſolicited by the lady of the houſe, he ſung. How could he reſiſt the power of beauty? I have extracted from him all the information I poſſibly could, concerning yourſelf; particularly with reſpect to your preſent ſpirits; and am very well pleaſed with you. Continue, my dear Gemello, to rub off your mind that abominable ruſt, which by degrees would have annihilated all your faculties. I ſhould purſue this ſubject, had I not a hundred diſagreeable letters on my hands, which I muſt inevitably anſwer: therefore,

(*b*) This performer was in England during the ſeaſons of 1758 and 1759, when the *Mattei* was manager, and firſt woman. He ſeemed to know muſic very well, and ſung in good taſte; but his voice was in decay, and his intonation frequently falſe.

with

with a hearty embrace, I recommend to your memory, your moſt faithful Gemello.

Vienna, September 12, 1763.

LETTER XXVI.

TO THE SAME.

VERY ſoon after the receipt of your laſt letter of the 23d of September, the reſpectable Dr. *Savich*, Æſculapius to the Prince of *Lichtenſtein*, appeared in my room: and immediately upon his entrance, giving me a hearty kiſs, ſaid that it had been conſigned to me by my moſt implacable enemy: I recogniſed immediately by the colour, of what materials the ſtuff was made; and he was aſtoniſhed at my ſpirit of prophecy. Oh how he is delighted with your courteſy, converſation, and every thing that belongs to you! He talked only of you, for an hour and half; and you may well imagine that I did not try to change the ſubject. He commiſſioned me to preſent a thouſand reſpectful and affectionate compliments to you on his part, and you ought to ſwear upon the *agnus Dei* that he was punctually obeyed.

Therefore

Therefore honour the letter of credit, which I draw upon you at ſight, for value received. I have not yet ſeen Baron *Leſchengold*, but in the mean time, I have contrived, with the aſſiſtance of a common friend, to let him know how much you have ſaid in your letters concerning him.

Dear Gemello, my mute devil will ſay nothing, either good or bad. When I am unable to ſpeak plainly, I am ſilent; not having been able, in thirty three years reſidence at court, to learn the language of oracles that are applicable to every ſenſe. My taſte is for the round *yes* or *no*, the taſte of our anceſtors. Now between ourſelves, I ſhall tell you frankly; that if your project is ſuch as it ſeems to me, through your myſterious expreſſions, there is nothing in the world, *with reſpect to myſelf*, which would afford me greater pleaſure and conſolation; and if you doubt a moment of this truth, you would be (what my Gemello never can be) the moſt ungrateful animal that ever was on the ſurface of the earth. But the *bus illis* is ſuch, that an honeſt man ſhould never purchaſe his own pleaſure at the expence of a friend, and particularly of ſuch a friend as you are. How is it poſſible for me to judge of theſe

futrue

future contingencies, if I am utterly ignorant of the Southern and Northern diſpoſitions, which may render the ſuppoſed project prudent and practicable? He would be a ſtupid phyſician, indeed, who ſhould attempt to cure, without knowing the diſeaſe and ſtate of the patient. What I perfectly know is, that you have acted ſuch a part in the world, as renders you unfit for inferior characters. This is all that my heart, which is wholly devoted to you, can ſay. If you will explain yourſelf further, I ſhall ſecond your wiſhes to the utmoſt of my power. In the mean time, continue to love yours moſt faithfully (*i*).

P. S. The King of Poland paſſed to a better life the 5th of laſt month.

Vienna, October 10, 1763.

(*i*) The letter to which this was an anſwer, notwithſtanding the myſtery in which its contents were couched, ſeems, from the reply, to have included an invitation to the poet to ſpend the reſt of his days with his twin friend in Italy.

J. B. T.

LETTER XXVII.

TO THE SAME.

In ſpite of a heap of extremely tireſome letters, which I have to anſwer, and the company of ſome nymphs, who have had the goodneſs to drink chocolate with me in my poetical cabin, though it is poſt day, and are all cackling like geeſe in the next room, I cannot help embracing moſt heartily my dear Gemello: and being as much in want of materials as time for a long letter, let this ſerve only as a manifeſtation of the conſtancy of my well cemented twinſhip.

It is moſt certain, dear friend, that I have an exceſſive deſire to viſit Italy; but there are ſo many fifes to tune, that it is no eaſy matter to determine. The South, the North, the Eaſt, the Weſt, and every canton of this miſerable globe which we inhabit, has its particular intemperance and inconveniencies: and we muſt regulate ourſelves like prudent pilots, not merely to avoid diſgrace for our want of judgment, but remorſe, which is the greateſt torment to which rational beings

are expoſed. But do not imagine from this preachment, that I have wholly relinquiſhed the hope of ſeeing charming Italy again, at leaſt for a ſhort time. Who knows? In the mean time, take great care of the *fardle, number one*, and continue indefatigably to equal the true and tender friendſhip of your moſt conſtant Gemello.

Frain, November 14, 1763.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

THE impertinence of your complaints, which, according to your laſt letter, have obliged you to keep your bed, has put me into a great rage. While there are ſo many malevolent animals upon which they might have amuſed themſelves to the advantage of humanity; why ſhould they torment honeſt gentlemen, born to delight and aſſiſt their fellow creatures? But we muſt not dive into the myſteries of Providence. The good-humour which reigns in your letter makes me hope, that you have ſubdued theſe domeſtic foes, and I am impatient to have it confirmed.

When-

Whenever I am able to tranſport my frail frame towards the ſouth, be aſſured, my dear Gemello, that I ſhall not chuſe the time when the great northern ſtars are in motion *(k)*. How could I poſſibly ſurvive ſuch a tumult? Crowds of travellers, ſcarcity of beds, tired horſes, inſolence of ſuperiors, neglect of inferiors, rapacity of poſtmaſters, drunkenneſs of poſtillions, inns robbed, roads broke up, diſorder, confuſion, hurry, ſcarcity, and a thouſand other plagues of all kinds! Mercy on me! The merely thinking of theſe things makes my hair ſtand an end. During more than thirty-three years that I have been in this old vortex, I have contrived to avoid all ſuch enterpriſes: think therefore whether, at this time of the year, I ſhould be able to make ſo raſh and daring an experiment: I, who for ſo many years have lived in this imperial reſidence like a hermet in the deſerts of the Thebaid; and who never ſet my foot in the court, unleſs when a command from my moſt clement ſovereigns illumines my humble dwelling, and conducts me to the imperial palace. If we do not begin

(k) This was written at the time of the general peace in Germany.

to

to open our eyes to our own infirmities, when, and to what, my dear friend, ſhall we open them?

Adieu. Recommend me to your daily goſſips, as I never fail to ſpeak of you to all my favourite prattlers. But above all, take care of yourſelf, and preſerve ſo valuable an individual to your, &c.

Vienna, December 12, 1763.

LETLER XXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Our amiable *Petrillo*, after having been more than a mere ſpectator of the calamities and cataſtrophe of the tragedy of poor Dreſden, has paſſed through this country like lightning. He is going to breathe the delightful air of Italy, and, after ſo much agitation, to paſs in tranquillity the reſt of his days. If he puts in practice the wiſe philoſophical maxims which he now profeſſes, he will be worthy of envy. I could not reſiſt this opportunity of embracing my dear Gemello, and of aſſuring him, though I truſt unneceſſarily, that my affection for him will never be diminiſhed, till this little piece of mechan-

mechaniſm ſhall be totally decompounded. I hope yours gathers ſtrength daily, and that your ſoul being commodiouſly lodged, may cheriſh that chearful and feſtive diſpoſition which embelliſhed your former days, and lightened the heavieſt vexations of life. Think of me now and then, my dear friend, and believe that I am, and ever ſhall be, your moſt faithful, &c.

Vienna, February 1, 1764.

LETTER XXX.

TO THE SAME.

Now, as your complaints aſſail you in F-FA-UT, with a *ſecond* and *fourth*, the remedy, my deareſt Gemello, is plain. The natural reſolution is in C-SOL-FA-UT; *(l)* and when it is known what is to be done, it is our own fault if we ſuffer by not doing it. The

(l) This playful alluſion to the laws of harmony, will be well underſtood by muſicians; but may want explanation by ſuch readers as have not been initiated into the myſteries of compoſition. The *ſecond* and *fourth* being diſcords to the muſical ſound called F, the ear remains in torture till it hears the *perfect chord* of C, as chord of the ſixth to the baſe E: which, figuratively implies, returning from *ſickneſs* to *health*, or from *vexation* and *embarraſſment*, to *tranquillity* and *comfort*.

worſt is, when we know not which way to ſteer. In ſuch caſes, I form an alliance with patience: conclude that I have a certain burthen to carry, ſettle it on my poor ſhoulders, and then I ſuffer much leſs by its weight than if I carried it aukwardly. Believe me, my dear friend, you can purſue no better method. All the impatience to which you may give way, will only aggravate and augment your injuries, and make a loſs of four equal to eight. All the knowledge we have, comes from experience in morality, as well as natural philoſophy.

If you wiſh clearly to underſtand your Gemello, never ſeek for any other meaning in his words, than that which they preſent at firſt ſight. The ſpeaking or acting myſteriouſly and politically, is not my way, nor a way I underſtand, after thirty-four years at court. I am as ignorant of the aulic ſcience as when I firſt entered the ſervice. Nature has made me, in this reſpect, like a duck, who paſſes a great part of its time in the water, without ever being wet.

Our *Petrillo*, who flies through Vienna, will bring you this letter, and a hearty embrace.

Vienna, Feb. [illegible] 1764

ET.

LETTER XXXI.

TO THE SAME.

YOUR laſt letter of the 5th inſt. has really conſoled me. From the ſerenity and pleaſantry with which it is coloured from the beginning to the end, I conceive that you are at length arrived at the ſecret of wiping from your mind that curſed ſoot with which it has ſo long been diſcoloured. I congratulate you on your ſucceſs, in an enterpriſe which borders on a ſpecies of heroiſm of which ſo few are capable. We have an infinite number of great men, who are venerated as models of knowledge and prudence, who have ſunk under cataſtrophes much leſs violent than yours. Happineſs, therefore, attend my dear Gemello! who has proved himſelf as much ſuperior in adverſity as proſperity, and who knows how to eſtimate human felicity better than thoſe who call themſelves philoſophers; and is in no want of ſcholaſtic jargon to enable him to ſtand firm and motionleſs in every guſt of wind. Heaven bleſs and keep you in this wiſe and placid ſtate for at leaſt half a century!

Our dear *Majo* has been arrived ſome time, but I have ſeen him but once, and then only for a ſhort time. I received him with all that affection which I cannot help beſtowing on perſons beloved by you, and whoſe merit is univerſally known *(m)*. Nor ſhall I neglect any opportunity of ſerving him, as far as the auguſt circumference of my limited faculties ſhall extend. The beſt of it is, that he not only never comes near me, but leaves me in perfect ignorance of the hiding place where he has hitherto amuſed himſelf here, during the leiſure in which he has hitherto lived. Perhaps ſome ancient ſparks have rekindled the extinguiſhed conflagration, and the poor ſoul will be involved in the flames and ſmoke which formerly, as I am informed, ſcorched and confounded him.

Adieu, my amiable Gemello; continue to let me enjoy the pleaſure of hearing of your tranquillity: take care of your health, and embrace for me, my dear and much honoured Carlani.

Vienna, March 27, 1764.

LET-

(*m*) This muſt have been the celebrated Neapolitan compoſer, *Ciccio de Majo*, who died young, about the year 1771. He began to flouriſh in 1759; having compoſed that

LETTER XXXII.

TO THE SAME.

THE pleaſant inventory of your tranſient complaints, contained in your laſt letter, would have made me laugh, if the idea of the ſufferings they muſt have occaſioned, added to the daily experience of my own, had not awakened a croud of ſerious reflections. But theſe are not worth a fig; and, indeed, are themſelves worſe plagues than the others. Therefore, my dear Gemello, the moſt infallible antidote is, not to think of them, except when the machine is diſordered by them; but to go on, as well as we can, in hoping for good, and tolerating the evils of exiſtence, as I am now obliged to do.

Your moſt amiable *de Majo* generouſly gives me credit for wiſhing to ſerve him, but

that year, *Riccimero*, for the theatre *delle Dame* at Rome, and in 1763, the year when this letter was written, his *Demofoonte* was performed in the *Argentina* theatre of the ſame city. The laſt opera he compoſed was *Didone*, for the theatre at Venice, 1770.

hitherto has abſolutely avoided putting my zeal to the teſt. A man of his merit, and your friend, would have a right to diſpoſe of me at his pleaſure. But he, who is no fool, knowing perhaps the little extent of my power, is unwilling to expoſe me to the ſhame of confeſſing it. I am unable to inform you whether he has been caught in the old net. I never frequent the woods which expoſe him to ſuch danger, and have never been able to examine him; as during his long reſidence on the banks of the *Iſter*, I have only had the pleaſure of ſeeing him two or three times, at moſt. Indeed his continuing ſo conſtantly inviſible, and remaining here ſo long, without any apparent motive, ſeems to favour your conjectures. If he is at ſea, I wiſh him a proſperous gale; if ſuch a wiſh is not inconſiderate: as the felicity of a navigation depends much on the cauſe for which we embark; and I never wiſh my friends to be poſſeſſed of ſuch an inconſiderate courage.

I frequently ſee our merry friend, and the eloquent *Bonecbi*, who loves you as you deſerve: ſo that with this addition, and ſo many other amiable qualities, you may imagine how dear he is to me. I have faithfully

fully communicated to him your commiſſions, and he has charged me with too many things to be executed in this world.

Vienna, July 9, 1764.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

After diſtilling my brains for two whole days, I am obliged to confeſs, my dear Gemello, that I have not been able to decipher your *Tarantella*. I flatter myſelf that there is nothing very bad, as your humour is not tinged with melancholy: on the contrary, it is more ſerene and pleaſant than uſual. The myſterious language in which you have maſqued your new ſituation, has made me ſuſpect, that ſome irregularity had diſturbed the œconomy of your whole ſyſtem; and, that your virgin modeſty, which is alarmed by every ſhadow of immodeſty, had not ſuffered you to explain yourſelf. Whatever it is, I deſire you will immediately ceaſe to torment yourſelf about it, and not ſuffer it to prevent your intended nuptial viſit to our dear *Carlani*: to whom I wiſh abundant ſtores of all

kinds, neceſſary for the voyage he undertakes.

Our ardent and languid *Majo*, ſtimulated by his friends and by his duty, is at length ſet off for *Manheim*, where he is engaged to compoſe an opera for the Elector Palatine. With what heart he has left the banks of the *Iſter*, enamoured turtles ſay!

I ſhall be ſhort in my account of all the fine things which I am ordered to ſay to you, in the name of our moſt amiable common friend, Sig. Bonecchi, the Neapolitan conſul; but you will ſoon meet, and then I beg you to embrace him cordially and repeatedly for me. Think with what envy I ſhall be tormented, at not making a third in your meetings. I muſt have patience, as I ſeem only born for the exerciſe of philoſophic moderation. If you knew how well I bore my plagues, you would take me for a hero. But the trade of heroiſm is a vile employment, and my ſhoulders ache at the mere mention of it. But let us talk no longer of complaints and misfortunes. Conceal yours as much as you can, and I ſhall do the ſame by mine. In this manner we ſhall defeat the intentions of fortune, and bid defiance to ill-luck. Farewell; love me as you uſed to do.

And

And be aſſured, that in ſpite of all our plagues, you will ever be dear to me, and I to you.

Vienna, Auguſt 25, 1764.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

You muſt not imagine, my dear Gemello, that I am drowned in the river Lethe. I am ſtill among the living, but not my own maſter. My moſt clement patroneſs has too high an opinion of my worn-out poetical talents, and has now given me a taſk beyond the power of the hoarſe old ſwan. It is true, that oracular ſovereigns always qualify their commands with the gracious and moſt humane conditions of: *if you can: if you will*; but you know, by experience, what weight theſe phraſes have, when uttered by divinities. However, in ſpite of my occupations, I ſhall ſteal a few moments from the babling muſes, for the ſake of converſing a little with my dear Gemello, for however ſhort a time, in order to break our ſilence, and prevent it from becoming habitual.

I beg you, in my name, to wiſh vigour and a numerous progeny to our new married friends, and their ladies. Continue to love me; pray to heaven to grant me patience; and believe me, till the conſummation of all things, yours, &c.

Vienna, November 3, 1764.

END OF THE FIFTH SECTION.

SECTION VI.

AS there is a chaſm of ſix months between this letter, and the next to his friend Farinelli, we ſhall go back to his other correſpondents, in order, as much as poſſible, to let them march a breaſt.

The following letter, to *Padre Martini*, is of no other importance, than as a record of Metaſtaſio's friendſhip and regard for that venerable and worthy muſical monk; who had ſent him a book of Duets for two voices, which were afterwards printed, and dedicated to the late Electreſs dowager of Saxony. They are in an eaſy mixed chamber ſtyle, in which ancient and modern paſſages are agreeably interwoven. The words were wholly ſelected from the works of the imperial bard.

LETTER I.

TO PADRE MARTINI.

By the kind care of the worthy *Abate Preti*, the bearer of this letter, I yeſterday found

found upon my harpſichord, the maſterly duets of which you, reverend Sir, have done me the honour to make me a preſent. Our young female compoſer executed them all immediately, one after the other, with the aſſiſtance of a ſecond voice. And we have concluded, that they will long remain ſubjects of ſtudy for her, and of delight to me: ſo much do we admire them at preſent. I am extremely obliged to you, not only for this gift, but for your partiality to my rhymes; and am anxious for an opportunity of manifeſting with what ſincere and perfect eſteem I have the honour to be, &c.

Vienna, March 1764.

About this time, *Padre Martini*, in writing his hiſtory of muſic, being in want of a M. S. in the Imperial library, at Vienna, applied to Metaſtaſio to procure him a tranſcript of it; and the following letter is an anſwer to the acknowledgments which he had received from this good father, for having complied with his requeſt.

LET-

LETTER II.

TO PADRE MARTINI.

Your moſt obliging letter has afforded me a very ſingular ſatisfaction; as I diſcover by its contents, that you are pleaſed with the extracts which I had the happineſs to procure for you. Indeed I am not a little proud in having done a ſervice to the public by contributing my ſmall ſtore of materials towards the conſtruction of your ſublime edifice. *Sig. Martinetz*, keeper of the Imperial library, and his indefatigable ſiſter, return with reſpect and gratitude, their beſt compliments: and for myſelf, I beg you to believe, that I am eager for new occaſions to ſhew my readineſs in obeying your commands, and have the honour to be with the moſt reſpectful eſteem, &c.

Vienna, Auguſt 2, 1765.

The following letter having been written to explain a doubtful paſſage in Metaſtaſio's *Aleſſandro nell' Indie*, ſeems worthy of a place here, as every difficulty in an author's works, is beſt explained by himſelf.

LET-

LETTER III.

TO SIG. NICCOLO DELLA CHIESA, IN SALUZZO.

My first duty, in answering the letter with which you have honoured me, is to thank you and your illustrious and enlightened nobility, for the partiality you are pleased to express for my writings. The second duty is, the speedy execution of your respected commands. I shall therefore, without stopping to say how much I think myself honoured by your favourable opinion, hasten to the business in question.

The first opening of *Alessandro nell' Indie*, presents to the spectators a view of a ruined camp, a flying army, and *Porus* in vain trying to stop their flight. He cries out to the fugitives to rally, and tries to stimulate courage by reproaches; *Fermativi a codardi!* (Stop cowards!) He endeavours to revive in them sentiments of magnanimity and fortitude, by reminding them, that life is not worth saving by a shameful and ignominious flight, at the expence of honour. *Ah con la fuga mal si compra una vita.* The frightened soldiers

ſoldiers continue to fly, without liſtening to him. When *Porus* deſpairing of being heard, no longer looks after his fugitive troops, ſays to himſelf, almoſt in the voice of reproach: to whom am I ſpeaking? Why ſhould I expect that men ſo terrified are capable of liſtening to reaſon, and of remembering the laws of obedience and duty? *A chi ragiono? Non ha legge il timor.* (With whom am I reaſoning? Fear has no law.) From this interpretation, you will eaſily comprehend, Sir, that the performer who repreſents the character of Porus, ſhould not recite the words *A chi ragiono?* with his face turned towards the fugitive ſoldiers, but to himſelf, or *(from theatrical licenſe)* to the audience, and never in a commanding tone: but rather in that of a man who blames himſelf for having made a fruitleſs attempt.

I am extremely fortunate that this diſpute has occaſioned me the honour of your commands, and I hope that my ready obedience will obtain for me the continuance of that partiality with which I am ſo much flattered.

Vienna, June 24, 1764.

This year, Metaſtaſio reſumed and finiſhed his correſpondence with *Signora Accarigi*.

He had ſent this lady a copy of his new opera of EGERIA, written for the coronation of Joſeph (the late Emperor) King of the Romans, and ſet by *Haſſe*; and having received a letter of thanks for his preſent, the following is the poet's reply.

LETTER IV.

TO SIGNORA LIVIA ACCARIGI.

WHEN I had the honour, madam, to ſend you my *Egeria*, I had no other intention than to remind you of my eſteem and reſpect; but my meſſenger having exceeded her commiſſion, I perceive that ſhe has exacted from your politeneſs, an exceſs of gratitude, and obliging expreſſions. The merit of having procured me ſuch enviable advantages, will render me more indulgent to the frailties of my fortunate commiſſary. I ſhall not exaggerate to you, madam, the vanity excited in a poet by the approbation of a muſe; on the contrary, I ſhall carefully avoid meddling with a ſubject ſo perilous. Continue, moſt illuſtrious lady, with your laudable application to do honour to your ſex,

ſex, by furniſhing new motives of admiration, in the midſt of which I entreat you never to forget the conſtant eſteem, and ſincere reſpect with which I am and ever ſhall remain, &c.

Vienna, October 4, 1764.

Metaſtaſio's fame at this time, was ſo great, and extenſive, not only as a dramatic poet, but as a man of learning, taſte, and genius; that his opinions were eagerly ſought on ſubjects of literature, by critics, ambitious of being his correſpondents, in all parts of Europe. It is poſſible, perhaps, for a man of learning, ſtudy, and natural acumen, to be a good critic of the works of others, without genius for producing original works themſelves, ſimilar to thoſe which they are able to cenſure: as was the caſe with Longinus, Bentley, Boſſu, and others; yet ſtill, *cæteris paribus*, the opinion of practical poets, and practical artiſts of every kind, will have more weight in the ſcale of criticiſm, than thoſe of mere theoriſts.

The following letter, the only one in the collection, to the ſame perſon, ſeems to contain Metaſtaſio's poetical creed.

LETTER V.

TO SIG. D. DOMENICO DIODATI.

If I had been able to gratify my wiſh, you would not, Sir, have waited ſo long for this anſwer to your letter. But it very ſeldom happens, my much reſpected friend, that I am a free agent. A laſting ſeries of ſocial duties and friendly offices, always required and always inevitable, cruelly deprive me of that leiſure, which the uncertainty of my health, and the duties of my employment would now and then, perhaps, allow me to dedicate to ſome genial ſtudy and uſeful intercourſe, with thoſe very few *quos æquus amavit Jupiter*. The profit and pleaſure which I derive from your letters, would oblige me to deſerve them more frequently by the punctuality of my anſwers: and if I am ſometimes obliged, much againſt my inclination, to neglect our correſpondence, the loſs I ſuſtain by it, ſhould entitle me rather to pity than pardon. I ought here, before all things, to proteſt againſt the exceſs

of

of your partiality for me; but the merely repeating what you ſay, even with a view to combat it, is extremely dangerous. The vanity of poets has no occaſion for incitements; its perſuaſions are but too ſeducing, and in order that my moderation may preſerve a due equilibrium, I muſt not expoſe myſelf to ſuch powerful temptations. Let me therefore haſten to anſwer your queſtions.

I confeſs that free eloquence would have had an equal ſhare of my attention with that which is confined to meaſure; but deſtined to be numbered among the inſects of Parnaſſus, it has not been in my power to divide my time equally between them. I have frequently attempted ſome proſe production, between my poetical occupations, yet always analagous to my trade; but obliged by ſovereign commands to return to the *tibia* and the *lyre*, the parentheſis has been ſo long, that when I went back to my interrupted labours, I found the metal which I had left in fuſion and ready for the mould, ſo chilled, that I was obliged to abandon it. And finding in myſelf leſs patience for running back after diſſipated ideas, than courage for new enterpriſes, I became ſo diſſatisfied

and diſguſted with my attempts, that I totally diſcontinued them. However, theſe attempts, or rather abortions, perhaps, ſtill exiſt, in a diſperſed and confuſed ſtate among my looſe and uſeleſs papers, like the Sybil's leaves, diſſipated by the wind; but in pure œconomy of my little credit, I ſhall take care that they do not ſurvive me (*n*); eſpecially if one day or other (which I can hardly hope) I do not get leiſure ſufficient to put them in ſome decent order. The only labours which, in deſpite of the buſkin, I have ever been able to terminate, are ſome ſhort *obſervations on the tragedies and comedies of the Greeks* (*o*). But theſe obſervations, beſides the want of amplification and correction from the errors of haſte, are only tools of my workſhop, and no leſs through my own defects than the nature of the ſubject,

(*n*) The poet was ſincere in this declaration: for neither theſe *Obſervations*, his *Extract from Ariſtotle's Art of Poetry*, nor his tranſlation of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, with notes, appeared till after his deceaſe.

(*o*) Theſe, and ſelect letters &c. by Metaſtaſio, which will be further mentioned hereafter, are now printing at Vienna, from the original MSS. which the publiſher has obtained from *Mademoiſelle Marianne Martines*, the poet's eleve and executrix, in three volumes, and in three different forms, to ſuit the laſt Paris and Venetian editions.

in want of that kind of alluring eloquence which ſeduces the reader. And therefore, uſeful only to myſelf, they aſpire at no public approbation.

As to my private letters, they never ſeemed to me to merit the trouble of being regiſtered. However, for ſome years back, a ſtudious young man (*p*), and a lover of our language, has been tranſcribing as an exerciſe, ſuch as the ſhortneſs of the time on poſt-days would allow, and has already collected a greater number than I wiſhed; but I am very certain that he will never abuſe my confidence, by ungratefully violating the expreſs order which I have given him not to publiſh them. And here, according to your requeſt, you have a moſt minute account of my proſaic applications.

Your ſecond requeſt, that I would pronounce between the merit of ARIOSTO and TASSO, is too difficult a talk for the limits of my faculties. You know, Sir, with what tumults the Parnaſſus of Italy was agitated, when *Godfrey* firſt attempted to diſpute the primacy with *Orlando*, of which he had

(*p*) This was the counſellor and keeper of the Imperial library, *Signor Giuſeppe Martinetz*, elder brother to the above lady.

juſtly been ſo long in poſſeſſion. You know alſo how the preſs groaned with the uſeleſs labours of your *Pellegrinis*, *Roſſis*, *Salviatis*, and a hundred other champions on both ſides. You likewiſe know that the pacific *Orazio Arioſto*, the deſcendant of *Lodovico*, vainly endeavoured to reconcile the combatants, telling them that the poems of theſe two divine bards were of a ſpecies ſo different, that they admitted of no parallel; that *Torquato* had determined never to lay down the trumpet, and had in a marvellous manner, adhered to his reſolution; that *Lodovico*'s deſign was to delight his readers with a variety of ſtyle, mixing in a pleaſant manner with the heroic, the jocoſe, and the feſtive, and had wonderfully ſucceeded. That the firſt had demonſtrated the magic power of art, the other the felicity of unreſtrained nature; that both had juſtly acquired the applauſe and admiration of the public; and that both had arrived at the ſummit of poetical glory, but by different roads, and without intentional rivalry. You cannot in ſhort, be ignorant of the more brilliant than ſolid diſtinction: that TASSO is the beſt poet, but ARIOSTO the greateſt. Now, knowing all this, how can you imagine, that

 I ſhould

I ſhould venture to arrogate to myſelf, ſufficient authority to reſolve this queſtion, which after ſo many obſtinate literary conflicts, ſtill remains undecided? However, if it is not allowed me in ſuch ſtrifes to ſit *pro tribunali*, I may, at leaſt, be permitted to relate, hiſtorically, the effects, which I myſelf have experienced in reading theſe great poets. When I firſt began the ſtudy of literature, I found the world divided into parties. That illuſtrious *Lycæum*, into which I had the good fortune to be received, followed that of the Homer of Ferrara, and with that exceſs of fervor, which uſually accompanies ſuch conteſts. In order to ſecond my poetical inclination, my maſter recommended to me the peruſal and imitation of ARIOSTO; judging his free and natural ſtyle to be more likely to feed and fertilize genius, than the ſervile regularity (as they called it) of his rival. I was perſuaded by authority; and the infinite merit of the writer, occupied me afterwards to ſuch a degree, that not ſatiated with ſeveral peruſals, I was induced to learn a great part of *Orlando* by heart; and woe to the bold man who dared aſſert that *Arioſto* could have a rival, or that he was not wholly immaculate! I met

with friends, however, who in order to ſeduce me, recited from time to time ſome of the fineſt paſſages of the *Jeruſalem delivered*, and I found myſelf extremely affected and delighted by them; but faithful to my ſect, I deteſted this complacence, and regarded it as one of thoſe ſinful inclinations to which corrupt human nature is prone, and which it is our duty to correct: and in this opinion, I paſſed all thoſe years in which our judgment is the mere imitation of others. At length, arrived at that period in which we begin to combine our own ideas, and weighing them in the ſcales of juſtice, yet more from ſatiety and a deſire of change, than hopes of pleaſure and profit, I read *Jeruſalem delivered*. It is now impoſſible for me to deſcribe the extraordinary revolution which this peruſal occaſioned in my mind. The ſpectacle, which I ſaw as in a picture, preſenting at one view a great and ſingle action, clearly propoſed, conducted in a maſterly manner, and perfectly completed; the variety of events which produced and enriched it, without confuſion; the magic of a ſtyle that is always clear, ſublime, and ſonorous; always ennobling the moſt common and humble objects; the vigour of the

colouring

colouring with which the author compares and deſcribes; the ſeducing evidence with which he narrates, and perſuades; the truth and conſiſtence of the characters, the connexion of ideas, the learning, judgment, and above all things, the wonderful force of genius, which inſtead of being exhauſted, as generally happens in labours of long continuance, is marvellouſly encreaſed to the laſt verſe of the poem; all theſe circumſtances filled me with a new delight, a repectful admiration, a lively remorſe for my obſtinate injuſtice, and an inplacable anger againſt thoſe who imagined *Arioſto* to be injured, merely by comparing him with *Taſſo*. Not but that I ſtill ſee in him ſome ſlight marks of human imperfection. But who can be ſaid to be exempt from them? Can his great predeceſſor? If *Taſſo* ſometimes diſpleaſes by too much labour and ſtudy, *Arioſto* as frequently offends by too little. If you would expunge from the one a few mean conceits, below the dignity of his own mind, you would as readily part with incidents in the other that are too profligate and indecent for the public eye; and if we ſhould wiſh for leſs rhetoric in *Godfrey*, the amourous tenderneſs of *Orlando*, would

give

give us much more pleaſure if it were more natural. *Verum operi in longo fas eſt obrepere ſomnum:* and it would be a malignant and pedantic vanity to point out with ſeverity the little ſpots in two ſuch bright luminaries, *quas aut incuria fudit, aut humana parum cavit natura.* All this, you will ſay, does not anſwer your queſtion. You wiſh to know exactly, and clearly, to which of the two you ſhould aſſign the pre-eminence? I have already, my dear Sir, reſpectfully declared my utter repugnance to ſuch a daring deciſion; and in mere obedience, have diſcloſed to you with the utmoſt ſincerity, in my own way, the emotions which each of theſe divine poets has ocacſioned in my mind. If all this does not ſuffice, take the following reſult of a late examination of myſelf upon the ſubject. If our good father Apollo, in oſtentation of his power, were ever capriciouſly to reſolve on making me a great poet, and commanded me openly to confeſs, which of the two bards I moſt wiſhed to reſemble, I ſhould certainly heſitate in the choice; yet, perhaps my native love of order, exactitude, and ſyſtem, would at length incline me to TASSO.

To

To what a length has my prattle extended! But I ſhall not load myſelf with *your* faults. You have drawn this on yourſelf, no leſs by your commands, and the love and eſteem which I bear you, than by that eagerneſs which I ever have to converſe with you, and to which you have now ſupplied me with ſo fruitful a ſubject. This eſſay, however, ſhould not alarm you. My intention from the beginning, circumſtanced as I am, neceſſarily obliged me to ſpeak with diſcretion. Continue to gratify me with your affection, and to believe me moſt truly yours.

Vienna, October 10, 1764.

Chronology has hitherto determined the arrangement of Metaſtaſio's correſpondence; but with the preceding diſcuſſion of the merits of the two great epic poets of Italy, the following Letters ſeem to connect, as branches of the ſame river. They ſhall therefore purſue their courſe, and leave ſome previous letters behind, for future inſertion. To know the principles upon which this charming writer built his fame, muſt gratify the curioſity, even of thoſe who peruſe his works for mere Amuſement; but to others, who intereſt themſelves

themſelves in the cultivation of the muſical drama, either as poets or compoſers, they may afford Inſtruction.

LETTER VI.

TO THE CHEVALIER DE CHASTELLUX, AT LANDAU.

You were not miſtaken, Sir, when you imagined that the peruſal of your learned and philoſophical little treatiſe, upon *the union of muſic and poetry*, would ſurpriſe me. This eſſay is ſufficient to manifeſt the extent of your acute, exact, and ſound judgment; as well as the ſolid, unpedantic cultivation of your happy talents. There is no Italian, or at leaſt none that is arrived at my knowledge, who has hitherto penetrated in his meditations ſo near the primary ſource of that lively and delicate pleaſure, which the ſyſtem of our muſical drama produces, and which it is capable of producing ſtill more effectually (*q*).

(*q*) ALGAROTTI's *Saggio dell' opera in Muſica*, PLANELLI, *dell'opera in Muſica*, ARTEAGA *Rivolutioni del Teatro Muſicale*; had not then appeared.

The

The true, ingenious, and minute analyſis which you have given of the *Rhythmus* or *vocal period* in our airs; the clear and maſterly manner in which you have deſcribed the neceſſity of not loading or diſguiſing the principal ſubject of theſe, with unneceſſary ornaments, availing yourſelf of the new ſimile of the *naked figure*, of which the limbs ought to be diſcoverable through all the pomp of dreſs; the tranſitions which you have deſcribed in paſſing from ſimple recitative, to accompanied, by imitating the natural progreſs of the paſſions; theſe, and other paſſages of your learned diſſertation (which I paſs over in order to avoid tranſcribing the whole Book) are luminaries not only valuable for their own ſplendor, but ſtill more, for the immenſe territory which they diſcover to thoſe who know how to avail themſelves of them in more diſtant voyages. I congratulate you ſincerely on your ſucceſs; and from myſelf, as an Italian and an author, you are entitled to a double portion of thanks. Yet, extremely jealous of the partiality of ſo enlightened a judge, as a poet, I ſhould have wiſhed, that our poetry ſhould not have had to envy the too great favour which you beſtow on your muſic; as I am alarmed at finding you

regard

regard *that* as the *principal object* of a drama; and attributing its advancement to the partnerſhip between them being *totally diſſolved*. Believe me, moſt reſpected Chevalier, whenever muſic aſpires at the pre-eminence over poetry in a drama, ſhe deſtroys both that and herſelf. It would be too great an abſurdity for the cloaths to diſpute the ſuperiority with the perſon for whom they are made. I know by daily experience, that my own dramas are much more certain of ſucceſs in Italy, when declaimed by comedians, than when ſung by muſicians (*r*). Now it is to be proved, whether the moſt exquiſite muſic of an opera, would ſucceed if detached from the words. Airs which are ſtiled *bravura*, of which you condemn the too frequent uſe, conſtitute the whole force of our muſic,

(*r*) When and where the dramas of our Author had been ſo ſucceſsfully *declaimed*, without Muſic, previous to this period, I know not; but in the year 1770, when I viſited the principal cities of Italy, in ſearch of information on every thing that concerned Muſic and Theatres, I heard of no ſucceſsful dramatic repreſentations, *without Muſic*. I make no doubt but that the aſſertion of the good Metaſtaſio, was well founded; but if his dramas had ever been better received in Italy, without Muſic than with, it muſt have been at a period previous to my arrival in that country.

which

which is trying to detach itſelf from poetry. In ſuch airs, no attention is paid to character, ſituation, feeling, ſenſe or reaſon; and merely oſtentatious of its own power of imitating violins and nightingales, it has only been able to communicate that pleaſure which ariſes from ſurpriſe; and of acquiring the ſame applauſe which is juſtly beſtowed on a rope-dancer, or a tumbler, who is able, by tricks and dexterity, to ſurpaſs common expectation. Modern muſic, proud of ſuch ſucceſs, has daringly rebelled againſt poetry; and neglecting true expreſſion, and regarding all attention to words, as a downright ſlavery, has indulged herſelf, in ſpite of common ſenſe, in every kind of caprice and extravagance; making the theatre no longer reſound with any other applauſe, than that of theſe *arie di bravura*; with the vain inundation of which, ſhe has haſtened her own diſgrace; after having, by her mad rebellion, firſt occaſioned that of the miſerably lacerated, diſfigured, and ruined drama (*s*).

Pleaſures

(*s*) If (I cannot help repeating) thirty years ago, Metaſtaſio was tired and diſguſted with the abuſe of *execution*, commonly called *bravura*, in vocal Muſic, what would he ſay now? The evil has certainly had a moſt rapid increaſe

Pleaſures which are unable to gratify the mind, or touch the heart, are of ſhort duration; for though men corporally ſuffer themſelves to be eaſily captivated by unexpected mechanical ſenſations, they do not for ever renounce their reaſoning faculties. In ſhort, this vicious taſte is at preſent indulged to ſuch an intolerable exceſs, that I ſhall either ſoon conſent that this fugitive ſervant ſhall be placed anew under a tutoreſs, who can ſo well embelliſh her, or elſe, entirely ſeparating muſic from dramatic poetry, let poetry content herſelf with her own native melody, ſuch as good poets never fail to furniſh; and let the other be employed in tuning the various voices of a chorus, in regulating the harmony of a concert, or guiding the ſteps of a dance, but without ever again putting on the buſkin.

increaſe ſince this letter was written; for now ſcarce any other excellence (as ſome think it) is aſpired at, but *rapidity*, and ſplitting notes into halves. Indeed, the *diatonic* ſcale is in danger of being as entirely loſt, and its exiſtence diſputed (particularly in pieces for keyed-inſtruments) as the *Enharmonic genus* of the ancient Greeks. Even TIME or RHYTHM, the τὸ πᾶν of the Greeks, and all ſenſe of regular and exact meaſure, ſeem in equal danger from the exceſſive uſe of the modern refinement called RALLENTANDO.

I ſhould

I ſhould not ſoon be tired of reaſoning with you, Sir, on this ſubject; but, my neceſſary avocations, rob me of all leiſure for pleaſures of this kind; therefore hoping, by my obedience, to have merited in ſome degree the continuance of that favourable propenſity with which you have hitherto honoured me, unſolicited, I remain, deeply impreſſed with gratitude and reſpect, Sir, &c.

Vienna, July 15, 1765.

LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME CHEVALIER, AT PARIS.

If I had a few Olympiads leſs on my ſhoulders, the ſtrength, learning, eloquence, and grace, with which you have defended the cauſe of muſic in your laſt letter, would have induced me to abandon every other employment for the ſtudy of that art. But in our time, a man would not be regarded with great reverence, who had always a Lyre in his hand, as was the caſe formerly in Greece, when it was deemed an ornament, not only to poets, but philoſophers and kings. However, it is a great conſolation to me, for my inſufficiency, to perceive

that we accord in ſentiment: a circumſtance of which I am very ambitious, as the moſt ſolid ſupport of my opinions. We are, therefore, perfectly agreed in regarding muſic as an ingenious, admirable, delightful, enchantreſs; capable of producing wonders by herſelf, and, when accompanied by poetry, and willing to make a good uſe of her immenſe riches, able not only to awaken and expreſs her imitations, but to illuſtrate and enforce every emotion of the human heart.

But at the ſame time, may we not agree to confeſs, that, at preſent, the profeſſors of this charming art, are guilty of enormous abuſes; making a ſenſeleſs uſe of their ſeducing powers of execution, out of time and place: often imitating the fury of a tempeſt, when they ought to expreſs the tranquillity of a calm, and the riotous joy of the *Bacchæ*, inſtead of the humble grief of the *Troades*, or *Supplicants (t)*. Hence, the bewildered audience, affected at the ſame time by paſſions in the muſic, ſo oppoſite to thoſe of the poetry, which, inſtead of aſſiſting, confound each other, can follow neither; but is re-

(*t*) Theſe are all Tragedies of EURIPIDES: The *Bacchanals*, the *Trojan Dames*, and the *Supplicants*.

duced to the more mechanical pleaſure which ariſes from harmonical proportions, and the compaſs and agility of a wonderful voice.

I could forgive a compoſer ſuch an intolerable abuſe, if the reſources of his art were few; nor would the impatience for diſplaying thoſe few reſources on all occaſions be ſo ſtrange; but, as there is no human paſſion which cannot be feelingly expreſſed, and marvellouſly embelliſhed by this beautiful art, in ways innumerable, why ſhould ſuch wanton inſults upon reaſon be ſuffered? Now you ſee, Sir, that I am equally partial to muſic with yourſelf; and however I may deteſt the preſent dramatical muſic, I only mean to ſpeak of our own modern artiſts who diſfigure it.

But a much more efficacious motive for conſolation is afforded me, by the familiarity which your laſt letter diſcovers you to have had with the Greek Theatre. A familiarity that inſures concord in our opinions.

You have before learnedly obſerved, Sir, that the primitive fathers of Tragedy, in order to furniſh muſic with opportunities for diſplaying its beauties, and to vary the expreſſion, ſometimes changed in the mouths

of the characters the uſual Iambics into Anapæſts, and trochees; nor has it eſcaped you that the perſonages themſelves ſung alone, with each other, and in dialogue with the chorus, *Strophes*, *Antiſtrophes*, and *Epods*; meaſures which naturally require that ſpecies of muſic which we now apply to air, and which you in a maſterly manner have called *periodical*: hence, by a neceſſary conſequence, you will conclude, that in flattering the effeminate ears of the audience with *Arietti*, we have, doubtleſs, illuſtrious ancient and great authority, both for *Air* and *Recitative*, no leſs than the Romans for their *Cantica*, and *Diverbia*. Nor is the Greek appellation of *Strophe* a ſlight proof of the high deſcent of airs: as both the learned and common people, with us, call the various metres of our Airs and Canzoni, by no other title.

Imagine not, Sir, that your exhortations are forgotten. You wiſh, that as there is a *republic of letters*, there ſhould be a *republic of arts*; and, conſequently, that poetry, muſic, and the other ſiſters, ſhould live amicably together, in perfect independence. For my own part, to confeſs the truth, I am no republican. *I cannot give this form of government the preference, becauſe it boaſts of having*

virtue

virtue only for its ſupport. It appears to me, that all forms are ſubject to deſtructive infirmities. I am ſeduced by the venerable example of ſupreme paternal authority; nor has the axiom, that the moſt ſimple and uncompounded machines are the moſt perfect and durable, ever been confuted. However, there is no conceſſion which I would not make, to coincide with your ſentiments. I am therefore ready, ſince you will have it ſo, to become a *republican*. But you know that the moſt jealous of all *republicans*, the Romans, perſuaded of the advantage of authority united in one perſon, during times of difficulty, elected a Dictator; and that, when it was erroneouſly thought expedient to divide this abſolute authority between Fabius and Minucius, they ran a great riſk of ruining the ſtate.

The production of a drama, in which all the fine arts concur, is an extreme difficult enterpriſe. Theſe, as much as poſſible to ſecure ſucceſs, agree to elect a Dictator. Does muſic aſpire at this ſupreme magiſtrature? Let it by all means be granted to her. But in that caſe, ſhe muſt take upon herſelf the choice of the ſubject; conduct of the fable, muſt determine the number of perſonages to be introduced; the characters,

and ſituations, muſt likewiſe imagine the decorations, and then invent her melodies; and laſtly, appoint poetry to write verſes that ſhall ſuit all theſe deſigns. Now, if muſic refuſes to do this, on account of the numerous faculties neceſſary to the perfection of a drama, the only ſcience which ſhe poſſeſſes being that of ſound, ſhe leaves the dictatorſhip, to whom ever has them all; and in the imitation of Minucius, ſhe will confeſs herſelf unable at once to command and to obey. On the other hand, if poetry ſhould only be allowed the title of occaſional ſervant, ſhe muſt inevitably become a rebellious *republican*.

I know that there is in France, a theatre diſtinguiſhed by the name of *Lyric*, where, becauſe the dramas are ſung, you imagine the ſupremacy naturally belongs to muſic. But this circumſtance never conſtituted among the ancients a diſtinct theatre. Of the ſix neceſſary conſtituent parts of Tragedy, that is, among thoſe which are not merely occaſional, but which are neceſſary throughout a piece, ſuch as, the *fable*, *characters*, *eloquence*, *ſpeeches*, and *decorations*, Ariſtotle mentions, though in the laſt place, MUSIC.

And

And in fact, it is difficult to ſpeak to the public, and be clearly underſtood, without elevating, enforcing and ſuſtaining the voice, much more than in common ſpeech. And this augmentation of voice, requires an art to regulate its proportions; otherwiſe ſounds would be produced that are ill modulated, diſagreeable, and often ridiculous. This art is no other than that of Muſic, ſo neceſſary to thoſe who addreſs themſelves to a diſtant audience, that when the performers can procure none from artiſts deſtined to compoſe it, they are obliged to form a natural melody for themſelves, under the title of declamation. .. But ſtill, if a real diſtinction ſhould be made between a muſical theatre, and a play-houſe, though both dramatic; if to the former ſhould be aſſigned the diſtinct attribute of Pindar, Horace, and their followers, the rights of muſic would not acquire greater weight. 'If in this Lyric theatre, an action is repreſented, if a fable is interwoven and unravelled, if there are perſonages and characters to be ſupported, muſic is in the houſe of another, and cannot be called the miſtreſs.'

But I am obliged, moſt worthy Sir, to finiſh; which I ſhould not have been able

ſo ſoon to do: ſuch is the profit and pleaſure I feel in the free communication of my thoughts, to a perſon ſo learned, reaſonable, and ſo partial as you manifeſt yourſelf towards me; did not my indiſpenſible duties call me to other labours. If ever they ſhould allow me ſufficient leiſure to arrange my extracts from the poetics of Ariſtotle, which I have long been meditating, I ſhall then communicate the various obſervations which I have made, for my own private inſtruction, upon all the Greek dramatiſts, and thoſe which the experience of half a century, without the merit of any peculiar perſpicacity, ought to have ſuggeſted to me. But on condition, that the ſame thing ſhall not happen to this letter as to the firſt which I addreſſed to you: I mean the being printed, without my conſent (*u*). The opinion which I oppoſe to the reigning taſte, however juſt and unanſwerable, will never be admitted without contention; and to contend, my dear Chevalier, is a buſineſs to which I am not inclined by temperament,

(*u*) Metaſtatio's former letter in reply to the Chevalier de Chaſtellux, was firſt printed in the *Gazette literaire*, at Paris, and afterwards publiſhed in the Dutch Edit. of that Periodical Work.

qualified

qualified by practice, fitted by ſituation, or a willingneſs to beſtow upon it that leiſure for which I have ſo great occaſion. It is a buſineſs in which you muſt have obſerved, that the moſt clamorous diſputes, and moſt learned abſurdities, paſs for reaſon; and is, in ſhort, a trade which uſually degenerates into abuſe, and which either requires too much forbearance to ſuffer, or too much ſcurrility to return. I know not how to quit you? but my auguſt and venerated Sovereign, from exceſs of clemency, not being yet tired of my *nugæ canoræ*, ſends me haſtily to Parnaſſus, and I muſt relinquiſh every thing elſe to obey her: thus in deſpite of Horace, who ſhouts in my ear;

Solve ſeneſcentem mature ſanus equum, ne
Peccet ad extremum ridendus, et ilia ducat,

Looſe from the rapid Car your aged horſe,
Leſt in the race derided, leſt behind,
He drag his jaded limbs, and burſt his wind.

FRANCIS.

I am, with due reſpect, &c.

Vienna, January 14, 1766.

The two preceding letters to the *Chevalier de Chaſtellux* ſeem to require a commentary,

as they relate to a muſical controverſy, not generally known in England.

The Chevalier de Chaſtellux, was an officer in the French guards, when he publiſhed his ingenious *Eſſay on the union of poetry and muſic (w)*. He was afterwards advanced to the rank of Brigadier-general, and ſerved with great zeal and activity on the ſide of the Americans, in the late war. Previous to which, he had diſtinguiſhed himſelf ſo much in literature, and taſte in the fine arts, that, in 1775, he was received into the French Academy.

His *Eſſay*, of which he had ſent a copy to Metaſtaſio, was the conſequence of a voyage into Italy, where he ſeems to have adopted an excluſive taſte for the dramatic muſic of that country, as Rouſſeau had done before. Indeed, he adopted ſome of Rouſſeau's ideas upon muſic; but, in general, he thinks for himſelf, both deeply and originally. By his reflections on the muſical drama, he not only offended the muſicians of France, but the Lyric poets of every country: not ſcrupling to aſſert, that in an OPERA "*Muſic*," which ought to be *the principal conſideration*, had been too long a ſlave to ſyllables; for

(w) *Eſſai ſur l'union de la Poeſie et de la Muſique.* à la Hay, 1765.

ſince

ſince the cultivation of the *Melo-drama*, it was found that muſic had its own language, its tropes, metaphors, colouring, movements, paſſions, and expreſſion of ſentiment.

This little tract gave birth to a long controverſy in France, in which the author was abetted by the *Abbé Arnaud*, the late *M. D'Alembert*, the *Abbé Morellet*, and *M. Marmontel*. His chief antagoniſt was the author of a *Treatiſe on the Melo-Drama*; who, loving poetry better than muſic, wiſhed to reduce the opera to a mere recitative or muſical declamation. During the ſubſequent feuds between the *Gluckiſts* and *Picciniſts*, the opponents of the *Chevalier de Chaſtellux* enliſted with the former, and his friends with the latter of theſe ſects.

The Eſſay in queſtion, is certainly humiliating to Lyric poets; but will only ſeem *unreaſonable*, perhaps to them and to thoſe who prefer declamation to ſinging. To others, the author will appear poſſeſſed of good taſte, and ſound reaſoning. Indeed he was the firſt French writer, after Rouſſeau, who ſaw the merit of Metaſtaſio, and had a true idea of Italian muſic, and Lyric poetry. *M. de Chaſtellux*, wiſhed that poets ſhould become muſicians, and muſicians poets. It

is

is not every man of wit and rhyme, who can write a ſong fit for any other muſic than that of a ballad. An air to be ſimple, characteriſtic, and impreſſive, ſhould have words to expreſs, that illuſtrate one ſingle idea, whether ſorrowful, gay, ſolemn, or ſportive. The verſe ſhould not be more regularly meaſured, or lines ending with the ſame rhymes more correſpondent, than the air ſhould be phraſed and ſymmetric, except in violent agitation, or moments of frantic paſſion.

What Metaſtaſio ſays of *bravura*, or airs of mere execution, is moſt true. Theſe, and high notes, have of late, however, been made ſo common, "that they ceaſe even to *ſurpriſe*, all they ever could do." Yet, however Metaſtaſio wiſhed to ſimplify dramatic muſic, it was not his intention, like French reformers, to ſtrip it of all ornament. Introductory ſymphonies, impaſſioned diviſions, and even a *cadence*, now and then, by a great ſinger, in the ſtyle of the ſong he has been ſinging, and as a ſupplement to the melody, or rather an *eſſence* of the compoſition collected into a narrow compaſs, he did not diſapprove.

In his remarks on the poetics of Ariſtotle (*x*), where it appears that the ancient

(*x*) To. XVI. p. 40, Edit. of Venice, 1783.

dramas, like modern operas, were entirely ſung, he has honoured muſic with a ſtrong and elegant eulogy. "Who can doubt," ſays he, "of the power of muſic over the human mind? Who has not obſerved its effects on himſelf and others? Who needs be told, that our violent paſſion for this art, has connected it with all human actions? In the ſacred ſervice of the temple, in feſtive meetings, funeral pomp, and even in military fury, muſic has a conſiderable ſhare (*y*). Its power is felt by the moſt rude and ſavage people; the moſt tender and helpleſs infants attend to it in the cradle, and ceaſe their complaints; the felon in the dungeon, and even the ſlave in chains, when labouring at the oar, ſeeks for ſolace, and finds it in ſong."

Crura ſonant ferro, ſed canit inter opus.

TIBULLUS.

Nor can compulſive labour check his ſtrains,
Or the harſh rattle of his galling chains.

Our Bard, indeed, does not reaſon quite fairly, when, in order to prove the ſuperiority of poetry to muſic, he ſays, that his own

(*y*) A coincidence of opinion, in ſpeaking of the many different purpoſes to which muſic is applied, luckily happened in the Preface to *The Preſent State of Muſic in Fr. and Italy*, long before the Bard's Sentiments on the ſubject could be known by the Author.

dramas

dramas are well received in Italy when declaimed *without* MUSIC; but that the moſt exquiſite muſic which has been ſet to them would not be equally favoured *without the poetry*. A kind of muſic of which the greateſt part is recitative, would never have been compoſed, if words had been out of the queſtion; but, a *Concert* of mere *inſtrumental muſic*, conſiſting of Solos, Duets, Trios, Quartetts, and full pieces, well compoſed, and exquiſitly performed, have often afforded great delight to an audience, without the aſſiſtance of words to explain their meaning. But when there *is* ſinging in a concert, who attends to the poetry? Or what is there to excite attention, except the unconnected words of a ſingle air, or the fragment of an opera ſcene, generally in an unknown tongue? If bad muſic ſpoils a good drama, good compoſition and performance, have ſaved many a one that is ill written. With reſpect to the controverſy between the *Chev. de Chaſtellux*, and his antagoniſt, the author of the *Traité du melo-drame*, I will not venture to pronounce, that either of theſe diſputants is perfectly right; or that each may not ſometimes truly ſay: "Brother, brother, we are both in the wrong." But I will frankly

frankly confeſs, that I have received great pleaſure, though of different kinds, from the operas of Metaſtaſio, on the old model, by Jomelli, Piccini, Sacchini, Sarti and Paciello, and from thoſe of Gluck on the new. The brilliant and beautiful parts of the muſic and ſinging in the one, have rendered me as charitable as inattentive to the reſt; while the general and continued intereſt of the other made me forget the beauties of introductory ſymphonies, the dexterity of difficult diviſions, and the genius, art, and extempore powers of long cloſes.

And yet, perhaps, an intereſting drama well ſet by a compoſer, who reſpects the poetry, without ſacrificing his own art and the performers, if ſingers of the firſt claſs, with whom the French are but little acquainted, would be a more perfect exhibition, than it is poſſible ever to render an opera, by adhering ſtrictly either to the *Piccinists* or *Gluckists*.

We ſhall now return to Metaſtaſio's correſpondence with his friend Filipponi, which furniſhes us with ſome particulars relative to his poetical employments, and the hiſtory of his court at this period, which we have not found elſewhere.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

TO SIGNOR FILIPPONI.

I HAVE been long tormented, my dear friend, by remorſe for the ſin of omiſſion towards you. It has run in my head, that one of your letters, which arrived during my late voyages to Parnaſſus, between which not a moment was allowed me to breathe, had been left unanſwered. Of theſe voyages, and the haſte with which I travelled, I ſhall give no account, leſt the remembrance of them ſhould renew my ſufferings. But in examining all the letters which I was neceſſitated to leave unanſwered, I am unable to find yours; and as I am likewiſe unable to account for its loſs, I begin to ſuſpect that there was no foundation for my remorſe; but if there had been, I believe there would be no occaſion for excuſes to you, who having known me *teneris unguiculis*, can read my heart, and will therefore never ſo far injure it, as to think me capable of any diminution in a friendſhip built on ſo ſolid a foundation. You are no ſtranger in Parnaſſus, and know how

how much our ideas are abſorbed during haſty journeys thither, taken at the pleaſure of others; particularly thoſe of a man who has already dirtied, with his *nugæ canoræ*, more than ten volumes. Not having it in my power to write to you, I have at leaſt had the pleaſure to conſign to the care of the eldeſt ſon of our good *Count Canale*, at Inſpruch, where I then was, a copy of my new drama (z), to be truſted to the care of ſome perſon, in the ſuit of the Duke of *Chablais*. I could not ſo eaſily have forwarded it from Vienna, unleſs by the poſt, the expence of which being here not very diſcreet, perhaps leſs ſo at Turin, would have far exceeded the intrinſic value of the gift. I have no doubt but that the Chevalier has ſeconded my wiſhes; particularly as I have not neglected to requeſt the Counteſs *Louiſa*, his ſiſter, to remind him of my commiſſion. Comfort me with good news of your health, and of that of the obliging *Prieſteſs*, whom I always modeſtly embrace, as well as yourſelf.

P. S. I open my letter, which was ſealed yeſterday, before I had received the unex-

(z) This was ROMOLO, ſet by *Haſſe*, and performed before their Imperial Majeſties at Inſpruch, on occaſion of the Nuptials of the Archduke LEOPOLD, (the late Emperor,) with the Infanta MARIA LOUISA of BOURBON.

pected tidings of the irreparable loſs which we have ſuſtained, by the death of our Emperor and father, Francis the Firſt; oh, my dear friend, it is impoſſible for you to imagine, how truly he merited our affection, and what will be the public deſolation! Think of it, and pity us!

Vienna, Auguſt 22, 1765.

This prince, who was in England, and viſited Sir Robert Walpole, at Houghton, in 1734, where the ſumptuous embroidered velvet-bed that was put up on the occaſion, is ſtill called the *Lorrain-bed*, was born in 1708, and married to the Arch-dutcheſs *Maria Thereſa*, afterwards the Empreſs-queen, in 1736, four years before the death of the Emperor Charles VI. after which he diſputed the Imperial crown with Charles VII. which, however, he did not acquire till 1745, upon the deceaſe of his competitor. The horrors of war, at this time, deſolated all Europe; and though the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1747, reſtored tranquillity to the empire; yet a new war broke out in 1756, which was not terminated till 1763, by the treaty of Hubulburg, in Saxony. The

Emperor

Emperor Francis, availed himſelf of the happy leiſure which this peace afforded him, to regulate his finances, and encourage commerce, ſciences, and arts, in all his dominions. He died ſuddenly at *Inſpruch*, regretted by his family and ſubjects, as one of the beſt princes that had ever governed the Empire. Humanity, ſay hiſtorians, which was his principal characteriſtic, did not diminiſh his valour, in his conflicts with the enemies of the country over which he reigned; and, in the wars of Hungary and Bohemia, he frequently ſignalized himſelf by his bravery. If, like the Egyptian kings, this prince had been tried by his ſubjects after his deceaſe, from what I was able to diſcover of their ſentiments ſeven years after, he would have been honourably acquitted of the crimes uſually aſcribed to Monarchs, when death has robbed them of power, ſplendor, and ſelf-defence.

LETTER IX.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

I NEVER doubted, my dear friend, of your diſcretion. You have too long been an inhabitant of my heart, to be ignorant of any

of its moſt inward receſſes; and none but an utter ſtranger to it could attribute the long ſilence for which I juſtified myſelf in my laſt letter, to indifference. Nothing is more true, than that ſince the firſt nuptials of our preſent Emperor, I have been ſcrambling in Parnaſſus, for what, after the many viſits I have made there, I did not dare to promiſe myſelf would be tolerated by the public; ſo that the favourable reception of my *Rómolo ed Erſilia*, comforted me beyond all expectation. Your approbation always pleaſes me, and I am grateful for it; but ſo friendly a judge ſtill leaves doubts of the merits of my labours. I am far more anxious (begging your pardon) concerning the favour of the nymphs of the *Dora (a)*, of which, according to your aſſertion, I have reaſon to be proud. Theſe, unluckily, cannot, like you, be ſeduced by perſonal partiality for the author, and where tenderneſs and affection are in queſtion, are practical judges, much more competent than Ariſtotle and Plato. I have ſome inedited compoſitions, but am not yet allowed to commit them to your royal preſs, as they are written for the Arch-duchеſſes;

(a) A river that empties itſelf in the Po, near Turin.

and

and have not yet been produced, nor heaven knows, conſidering the melancholy circumſtances of our court, whether they will ever be produced. I have likewiſe to inform you, that I have been obliged to write a long *Serenata* for the nuptials of the Prince of Aſturias. The performance of which is likewiſe deferred at Madrid, on account of the double mourning, till the end of the preſent year. You have an *Infanta* there; ſo that by means of ſome friend at that court, you may procure an early copy for the 10th volume, whenever it is printed and publiſhed. The title of the piece is, *La pace fra la tre Dee (b)*.

Vienna, October 10, 1765.

LETTER X.

TO THE SAME.

YOUR moſt welcome letter of the 12th of laſt April, found me at the inſtant of my

(b) Written for the nuptials of their royal highneſſes D. CARLOS of BOURBON, Prince of Aſturias, (the preſent King of Spain) and the Princeſs Louiſa of Parma, in 1765.

return from a ſecond excurſion to Parnaſſus, made by a ſovereign command, after that which I informed you, I had already made for the Iberian nuptials. You ſee plainly, that being obliged to take this journey after ſo many preceding expeditions lately, to the ſame place, without having time allowed to breathe, entitles me to ſome indulgence for involuntary neglect of friends. My *Serenata* for the court of Madrid, arrived at the place of its deſtination, by means of the Spaniſh Ambaſſador. It was received very graciouſly, and applauded much more than it deſerved. You will find by the public newſpapers, which only ſpeak the truth, that I received from the hands of the ſame ambaſſador, a preſent from his court of five large vaſes of exquiſite ſnuff: four of ſilver, and one of gold, ornamented with the royal arms, elegantly engraved upon the cover.

Now this *Serenata*, (unleſs privately, of which I am utterly ignorant) has never yet been performed. The reaſon for this I am unable to divine: perhaps the director not having engaged ſingers in time, as the Duke of *Medina Celi* had done, in Italy, it will be unprovided of performers, when wanted; and, in fact, the D. of *Medina Celi* had given commiſſion

commiſſion to Farinelli, at Bologna, to ſeek, engage, direct, and ſend ſingers male and female into Spain, before I was deſired to write the *Serenata*; and I have never heard that any ſuch commiſſion was given in Italy by the court. Hence, being ignorant for whom I was to draw the characters in my drama, and as I was not ſufficiently anxious to make much enquiry, in order to adapt the parts to their particular talents, I have been obliged to write at random, and in an incredible hurry. But whatever may have been the occaſion of this piece not having been performed, (which I have no inclination to inveſtigate) as it is not yet publiſhed at Madrid, it does not ſeem decent that any printer ſhould be furniſhed with a copy of it by me, though it ſeems to be one of my productions for which I have the leaſt occaſion to be aſhamed. The beſt part of the ſtory is, that beſides this, there are four other of my compoſitions which, for various reaſons, cannot yet ſee the light; ſo that imitating my own patience, your royal preſs muſt remain quiet for ſome time; and even when ſet to work again, it muſt not expect from me a *preface* to the additions I ſhall furniſh; as I am wholly ignorant what to ſay in it,

unleſs, like many other authors, I were, in the printer's name, to ſtuff it with my own praiſes.

Vienna, May 1, 1766.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

THE exactneſs with which the preſs has been corrected, as far as types are concerned, reſembles Alcina's noſe, in which *non trova l'invidia, ove l'emende*, "Envy herſelf could find no fault;" and it is an inconteſtible proof of the affectionate zeal and diligence of the dear and friendly reviſor to whom, with a hundred tender embraces, I render all due thanks. I am not ſurpriſed that this compoſition, being mine, has pleaſed you; but what could I write which would not be favoured with the approbation of ſo partial a judge to me, as my moſt conſtant Sig. Filipponi has always been? But even your miſtakes give me comfort, as proofs of that affection which occaſions them. I depend on the eloquence of my good Court Canale to diſplay the ſincere gratitude and reſpect

reſpect which I feel for the worthy Chevalier RAIBERTI, who has ſo obligingly offered to attend the preſs of the projected elegant edition of my works; but if you have an opportunity, I beg of you to preſent my thanks without the fear of overdoing it; as they can never be ſo often repeated as I could wiſh.

Signor—wrote to me long ſince, a fine letter in blank verſe, from which both myſelf and friends formed a very favourable opinion of his talents and learning; but the drama, my dear friend, is a literary province ſo perilous, that few get through it with whole bones. The continual expectation of encomiums under the name of corrections and opinions, throw me frequently into the diſagreeable neceſſity of betraying either truth and my friend; or of wounding his mind with a ſincerity, that can never be rendered tolerable by the moſt guarded and delicate expreſſions which language can furniſh. If, with the aſſiſtance of the Chevalier *Raiberti*, you could diſſuade Signor—— from involving me in ſuch difficulties, I ſhould be eternally obliged to you; but for heaven's ſake do it in ſuch a manner as not to diſcover to him my repugnance; otherwiſe

wiſe the new inconvenience would be worſe than that which I am trying to avoid.

I ſhould add many things concerning all your amiable family, but neither my time nor paper will allow it. Therefore, I muſt embrace you all *in ſolidum.*

Vienna, July 20, 1766.

LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

I INTEREST myſelf ſo much the more, my dear friend, in the rheumatic ſufferings which you ſo feelingly deſcribe in your letter, as I am frequently ſtruggling with the ſame malady myſelf, and therefore know all the graces and allurements of ſuch companions. I comfort myſelf in finding that, for the preſent, you have valiantly ſubdued them; but hope you will not acquire a taſte for ſuch bad company.

If the courageous Sig. *Rabi* determines to undertake a new impreſſion of my works, with the projected magnificence, I ſhall pray to Mercury for his ſucceſs, and give him every aſſiſtance in my power, at ſo great a diſtance.

diſtance. If he is only in want of materials for a tenth volume, the incloſed memorandums will convince you, that there are more than ſufficient for that purpoſe; which I ſhall tranſmit as ſoon as I am able, corrected and poliſhed for his uſe.

It is neceſſary, in the mean time, to give you two pieces of advice: the firſt is, that this new volume, which at preſent we call the tenth, ought, in the edition under meditation, to be the ninth, and that which in the former edition, was the ninth, the tenth; in order that thoſe pieces which I produced in my early youth, with the table of contents and index of the airs, may ſtill be in the laſt volume.

The ſecond thing which I have to inform you, is, that ſince the ſumptuous and public preſent that was made me from Spain, for the *Serenata*, entitled *La pace fra le tre Dee*, written for the nuptials of the Prince of Aſturias, I have never had the leaſt information concerning that production. I cannot therefore, in delicacy and propriety, ſend it to the preſs, before I am certain that it has been printed at Madrid; and the ſame delicacy forbids my making any enquiry about it.

The

The drama with which I was threatened, is not yet arrived; may Apollo, in his mercy, preſerve me from ſuch a misfortune! Adieu.

Vienna, October 6, 1766.

LETTER XIII.

TO THE SAME.

THE proteſt in your laſt letter, againſt the perſecution of tireſome compliments of the ſeaſon, was only made politically, in order to deprecate my vengeance, and prevent me from ſending you a furious philippic on the occaſion, for a practice ſo inconvenient to ſociety, and ſo unneceſſary among true friends. You have been ſo long in poſſeſſion of my heart, that the almoſt immemorable preſcription would reſiſt a *fiery furnace*, and you would think unjuſtly of yourſelf and of me, if you ſhould imagine ſuch miſerable ceremonies neceſſary for the preſervation of our friendſhip, as are now juſtly regarded among the moſt teizing evils of civil ſociety.

If it is not too late, let me beg of you to ſuggeſt to the perſon employed to procure a

copy

copy of my ſerenata, *La pace fra le tre Dee* at Madrid, to addreſs himſelf particularly to the firſt major-domo of the Prince of Aſturias; at whoſe houſe I am told it has been performed; as his Catholic majeſty will ſuffer no muſic in his palace (*c*). This information may not be true; but the hint can do no harm, if falſe, or ſuperabundant. Believe me ever yours, with all my ancient affectionate and conſtant friendſhip.

Vienna, January 15, 1767.

LETTER XIV.

TO THE SAME.

THE intereſt which you take in my ſolicitude concerning the ſafe arrival of my dear Count Canale, is a proof of your kind and good heart; and I am extremely grateful for the information with which you have favoured me on that ſubject. Take, my delightful friend, the further trouble of informing him of my affection and reve-

(*c*) This was the late King of Spain, Charles III. who on his acceſſion to the crown, drove the modeſt and inoxious Farinelli from Madrid.

rence;

rence; and do not forget to tell him, that our crippled triumvirate bitterly feels his abſence (*d*).

Vienna, September 28, 1767.

We ſhall now reſume the correſpondence with Farinelli, for whom the affection of Metaſtaſio ſeems to have been ſincere and conſtant. And from the time of his loſing his royal Patrons in Spain, together with his ſplendid ſituation at that court, the poet appears to have intereſted himſelf very much in tranquillizing his mind, and reconciling him to his more humble ſituation.

LETTER XV.

TO FARINELLI.

THE harmonical caravan is on the point of departing for Inſpruch. Think, my dear Gemello, what my poor hypochondriac head muſt ſuffer. In ſpite of all this tumult, I cannot help loading the worthy Signor Bocchetti with ſome bales of embraces, ſalu-

(*d*) This triumvirate conſiſted, when entire, of *Count Canale*, *Baron Hagen*, and the Imperial Laureat.

tions,

tions, and affectionate expreſſions of kindneſs, to be carefully conſigned to my amiable Gemello; congratulating him on the amendment of his ſpirits, which I have diſcovered by a chearful letter that he has written to Signor *Becchetti*, whoſe company I have not been able to enjoy ſo much as I wiſhed, on account of my conſtant occupations. I ſaw paſs through this city, like lightning, our old *Petrillo*, with his young wife, and admire the ſcion graft: ſhe has not however had time to attempt the cure of the eloquent fluxion to which he is ſubject. But, my dear Gemello, theſe are incurable infirmities. They depend on the ſtructure of the machine, which can only be corrected by the great author who has made it. Adieu, continue to tranquillize yourſelf, and to love as you have hitherto done, your Metaſtaſio.

Vienna, May 31, 1765.

LETTER XVI.

TO THE SAME.

I AM extremely obliged to our dear *Becchetti* for his great punctuality in delivering

to you the embraces, ſalutations, and [illegible] expreſſions with which I loaded him, [illegible] your account, when he quitted this [illegible]. I beg you will tell him how grateful I feel, and return him my beſt thanks for his complacency and kindneſs.

You know, my dear Gemello, that I am a kind of duck, that remains in the water without being wet. During almoſt thirty-ſix years reſidence in a court, I have never been able to acquire either the myſterious air, or pompous exterior, which generally reigns there, or that learned diſſimulation which borders on fraud. Permit me therefore, with the ſincerity and frankneſs of a friend, hiſtorically to open to you my whole heart.

From the time in which I was immerſed in the nuptial feſtivals of our king of the Romans, there began to be propagated a rumour, that you were to go to Madrid to conduct the entertainments to be given in celebration of the marriage of the Prince of Aſturias. This rumour encreaſed by little and little, to ſuch a degree, that it was believed by the court, city, and public in general. I, who had received a letter from you without the leaſt hint at ſuch a journey, was the only perſon who refuſed to give credit

credit to this report. And to the many queſtions that were aſked me on the occaſion, as your acknowledged Gemello, I conſtantly and truly anſwered: that *you had never given me the leaſt information of any ſuch deſign: and that, therefore, I gave no kind of credit to any ſuch rumour.* Our riotous feſtivals were but juſt finiſhed, when tired, out of breath, and rendering thanks to father Apollo, that the time was now come when I ſhould be allowed leiſure to breathe, comes the Spaniſh Ambaſſador to whiſper in my ear the wiſh of his court, to have a *Serenata* for the nuptials of the Prince of Aſturias. You may well imagine my ſituation. I ſaid that though I was already prepared for the opera at Inſpruch, I was by no means certain that I ſhould not receive ſome new command from my auguſt Patroneſs. The Ambaſſador replied, that he had already ſpoken to my ſovereign. I then, certain that an abſolute command would rob me of the merit of a voluntary compliance, bowed the head to the decree of fate, with very little expectation that, in my tired and exhauſted ſtate, I ſhould be able to perform the taſk which was unexpectedly obtruded

upon me, in a manner worthy of the honour intended me by the court of Spain.

And here I muſt confeſs to you, that in reflecting on the rumour which had been ſpread concerning your journey, I did not firmly believe, but at leaſt violently ſuſpected, that you were the innocent cauſe of all my preſent embarraſſment. In ſhort, to complete the buſineſs, my excuſe to the Spaniſh Ambaſſador became prophetic. My patroneſs commanded another little drama to be performed by the Archdutcheſſes, at the return of the court from Inſpruch. What could I do in this dilemma? After maturely weighing circumſtances, I found that I had nothing elſe for it, but to invoke the muſes, ſhut my eyes, and patiently wait for their aſſiſtance. In the firſt place, I executed the commands I had received, as was my duty; and then went to work for Spain, and delivered to the ambaſſador the *Serenata* required, a month before the time allowed me was expired.

While I was balancing with myſelf whether I ſhould complain to you of the trick which I ſuſpected you had played me, there comes a letter from our friend *Hubner*, at Madrid,

Madrid, to aſſure me, that you were expected there, and that he was impatient to ſee and pay his reſpects again to his benefactor. Now my ſuſpicions became evident truths; and my Gemello was the ſubject of my complaints and grumbling, for the myſtery with which he had acted, and the ſcrape into which I firmly believed his partiality had led me.

But the melancholy ſtory does not end here. The Spaniſh ambaſſador a little while ago, juſt before his departure for Inſpruch, honoured me with a viſit, in perſon, and read me a long and polite letter of thanks from the Marquis Squillaci, *whoſe name till this moment, no one had ever mentioned*; and the day before yeſterday I received your letter of the 5th inſt. in which you ſpeak of this affair like a man juſt arrived in Europe from the country of the great Mogul or Japan. In the midſt of ſuch a ſtrange confuſion of myſtery, information, and conjecture, I have been unable to ſettle my creed, nor am I indeed, impatient to do it. It is a ſufficient ſatisfaction to my mind, that I have not concealed from my friend the leaſt thought, word, or deed, concerning this rather humiliating tranſaction.

By the infinite eſteem, which I have long felt for *Count Savioli*, the favourite of the Muſes, I have always done myſelf more honour than him. I beg of you to repreſent to him my lively ſenſe of his partiality: and take care not to confide to him all my inſufficiency, leſt it ſhould too much diminiſh the value of that friendſhip and regard, which through your means, I venture to offer him.

If I had leiſure to lengthen my letter, or rather babble, it might perhaps divert your attention from your own evils; but I am juſt on the point of beginning my daily attendance at Schombrun, in ſpite of the dog-days, till the return of the court, in order to be preſent at the rehearſals of our illuſtrious performers, who do me the honour to think my preſence neceſſary; you will therefore gueſs that I am not likely to be contaminated by the father of all vices. Adieu. Continue your affection for me, and believe me always with the moſt invincible obſtinacy, yours.

Vienna, July 18, 1765.

LET-

LETTER XVII.

TO THE SAME.

AFTER due thanks for the affectionate and candid return of confidence, which you have been pleaſed to render me in your very dear letter of the 30th of laſt July; I have no other to participate with you concerning my Southern compoſition, or Weſtern, as you pleaſe, than that I have not heard a ſyllable on the ſubject, ſince the thanks (of which I told you) that were delivered to me by the Spaniſh ambaſſador, before his departure for Inſpruch, in the name of the *Marquis Squillaci*; ſo that your information, at leaſt for the preſent, is not exact, as to the circumſtances which reſpect myſelf in this buſineſs.

If my commiſſion has been executed, of which I have no reaſon to doubt, you will have received, by this time, my new drama of *Romolo ed Erſilia*. I believe I have already told you, that I took care to ſend you a copy from Inſpruch, the moment it ceaſed to be contraband; a thing which I could not have done ſo ſoon, had I been far from the

court, and conſequently from the field of battle. I know that you will receive with tenderneſs this new little nephew: particularly as my eagerneſs to ſend him will convince you how conſtantly I bear you in my thoughts. Indeed you occupied them conſtantly when I heard the unexpected news of the unhappy death of the Duke of Parma; at which time, the firſt thing that preſented itſelf to my mind, was your affliction, with which my own was ſincerely mingled. But you have a ſtock of prudence, religion, and long and enlightened experience, ſufficient to prevent misfortune from taking you by ſurpriſe; ſo that you will find in Yourſelf, the moſt efficacious conſolation in ſuch difficult circumſtances.

Adieu, my dear Gemello. Remind Count *Savioli*, whenever you have an opportunity, of my reſpectful eſteem; take care of yourſelf, and believe me yours to the end of time.

Vienna, Auguſt 19, 1765.

LETTER XVIII.

TO THE SAME.

I RECOGNIZED all the amiable qualities of my dear Gemello, in the conſolation which your affectionate letter of the 26th of Auguſt afforded me. The tender part which you take in my juſt affliction, aſſures me of the place which I hold in your mind. And this certainly convinces me, that all our wretched life is not made up of bitterneſs. Your commiſeration is the more dear to me, as you know better than any one, by experience, whether I am worthy of it. Let us implore divine providence, as it has been pleaſed to render our tragical misfortunes ſimilar, that, in future, we may reſemble each other in happineſs. Believe me, in whatever ſituation we may be thrown, yours.

Vienna, September 9, 1765.

LETTER XIX.

TO THE SAME.

I AM not ſo much ſurpriſed, as ſorry, my dear Gemello, for the diſguſt which the un-

grateful return made by your harmonical caravan has given to yourſelf and your noble and generous friend, by whom, through your means, they had been choſen, collected, rewarded, and diſtinguiſhed. Though you are uſed (as you obſerve) to the odour of ſuch flowers, I can eaſily imagine how you muſt nauſeate them, and ſincerely pity you.

As yet I know not whether, when, or in what manner, my new nuptial drama, ſent laſt April, will be uſed on the banks of the *Manzanare*. I can add nothing to what I have already written to you on the occaſion, except that the Spaniſh ambaſſador, before his departure for *Inſpruch*, thanked me for my poem, in the name of the Marquis *Squillaci*, whom he had never mentioned to me before; and added, that a duet was much wiſhed for in the *Serenata*. In order to ſhew my willingneſs to oblige, I wrote one in a few hours time; but explained in a ſhort memorial, that as I had never been informed who were to be the performers, there was a chance of my having united two perſons in this addendum whoſe voices would not do well together; and did not conceal my opinion, that a duet could have little effect, performed ſitting, and without action, or

paſſion,

paſſion, as was uſually the caſe in ſerenatas. I conſigned the addition and neceſſary changes to the ambaſſador, before his departure. But he returned four days ago from the Tirol, and gave me new thanks, in the name of the Marquis Squillaci, for the duet which he had received. More than this, I am unable to tell you, concerning the affair in queſtion.

If your tormented frame muſt produce peccant humours, it is fortunate, my dear Gemello, that they ſhould aſſault the lower regions: as they are there of leſs conſequence; but it would be much better if none were produced. I can eaſily imagine the patience of which you muſt ſtand in need, and I participate in your ſufferings.

Adieu; pray ſend me better news of yourſelf, and believe me ever, &c.

Vienna, September 14, 1765.

LETTER XX.

TO THE SAME.

Our wandering *Petrillo* being returned from Saxony, with his pretty little wife, who has conceived hopes in northern climes of enriching him with a ſucceſſor, made me two

two viſits: promiſing to come and ſee me a third time, to take his laſt farewell: for this viſit I had reſerved my uſual *vaſe of ſalutations* to you; but the barbarian is gone *inſalutato oſpite*, and I am obliged to incloſe them in this letter, which will perhaps perform the office of commiſſary before his arrival at Bologna. Pray abuſe him for me, unmercifully; and tell him, that I ſhall never forgive him, if he does not make amends for his negligence, with ſpeedily ſending to Milan, the book with which I charged him for Sig. *Migliavacca*.

I have heard nothing more from Madrid, ſince the delivery of my ſerenata. I am teazed to death by the Roman printers, for a copy of it; but I cannot ſend it thither, or any where elſe, till it has been performed; and I am determined not to aſk the ambaſſador a ſingle queſtion about it, leſt my curioſity ſhould be miſconſtrued. So that if you ſhould know when it would be publiſhed in Spain, that I may give permiſſion for the preſs to work elſewhere, you will much oblige me,

Adieu, my dear Gemello. Be careful of your health, and believe that I ſhall never

ceaſe

ceaſe to love and eſteem you as you deſerve, that is to ſay, infinitely.

Vienna, October 31, 1765.

LETTER XXI.

TO THE SAME.

My dear Gemello always acts like himſelf, as well in ſmall things, as on great occaſions. The care and activity with which you have acted in forwarding my book to *Signor Migliavacca*, prove how much you intereſt yourſelf in the affairs of your friends: ſo differently from the generality of mankind, who can never detach themſelves from that deteſtable ſelf-love, which confines the whole univerſe within the narrow limits of their ſingle individuality. I thank you for it, and congratulate myſelf no leſs than you on every freſh inſtance of your diſpoſition, which makes me vain of the early opinion I conceived of your character.

Signor *Greppi* quitted this city haſtily, in order to go to Milan; and fearing, like you, the conjugal diſtractions of our *Petrillo*, I conſigned to the care of this gentleman, a ſecond copy of my book for Signor *Migliavacca*,

vacca, who has not only received, but thanked me for it. He will doubtleſs have received the other; but there will be no great inconvenience in his having two copies.

I remain in ſuch utter darkneſs concerning my Southern ſerenata, that I begin to forget its exiſtence. Your eagerneſs on the ſubject far ſurpaſſes mine. I am much obliged to you; but I beg you will take no further trouble about it. Say a thouſand kind things for me to *Papa Petrillo*, and believe me always, &c.

Vienna, December 12th, 1765.

LETTER XXII.

TO THE SAME.

THOUGH quite oppreſſed with letters, I cannot refrain from anſwering, at leaſt with brevity, my dear Gemello, and acquainting him, as his laſt confidentially affectionate letter deſerves, that three days ago, the Spaniſh ambaſſador, by order of his court, ſent me a magnificent preſent, conſiſting of fifty pounds of the beſt Havannah ſnuff, in five jars, four of ſilver, and one of gold, with

the

the arms of his Catholic Majeſty engraved on all the covers. A gift indeed worthy of the Royal munificence of ſuch a monarch. But with all this, I am yet ignorant whether the *Serenata* has yet been publiſhed in Madrid: ſo that I dare not yet ſend it to my brother at Rome, who is tormented for it by the book-ſellers *(e)*.

I beg you will preſent my humble reſpects to the *Marquis Herculani*, and *Count Savioli*, and aſſure them how much I am flattered by their partiality. Adieu my dear Gemello, I have time to write no more; but you know, without my trying to perſuade you of it, that I am, ever have been, and ever ſhall be, yours.

Vienna, December 30, 1765.

LETTER XXIII.

TO THE SAME.

If an impertinent defluxion, the fruit in ſeaſon, and very common here, had not rendered me for ſome days inactive, my dear Gemello would have ſuffered in the firſt

(e) This is the laſt mention that is made of his brother, in any of the letters which have hitherto been publiſhed.

tranſports

tranſports of my rage, for the formal proof he thought it neceſſary to give me, of his exactitude in forwarding *Romolo*. Is it poſſible, after ſo many years, that you can do me the injuſtice to ſuppoſe, that the receipt of a parcel by my negligent correſpondent *Migliavacca*, is of more conſequence, than a line from you! Do you not now deſerve all the ancient titles of Troglodyte, Anthropophagus, Leſtrigon, and Marine monſter! But this defluxion ſubdued my iraſcibility, and on days of penitence, vengeance muſt not be indulged. Therefore I embrace you heartily, and forgive you.

Our worthy Count *Roſenburgh*, is now on the banks of the Arno, enjoying the delights of Tuſcany, while we are entirely buried in ice and ſnow, to ſuch a degree, as to be unable to move in the ſtreets, in a boat, a coach, a chair, on foot, or on horſeback. Oh! how I long for the ſpring! But as you will ſee her in your part of the world, before ſhe comes hither, pray ſalute her in my name, and urge her on as quick as poſſible *.

* Though *Ver*, the ſpring, is of the neuter gender, Metaſtaſio has perſonified this youthful ſeaſon, *alla Italiana*, by making it feminine.

Pliny has *Primo vere*, whence the Italian *Primavera*.

I do

I do not underſtand the myſtery of the *Serenata*, but I reſpect it. Take care of yourſelf, my dear Gemello, who are at preſent certainly not in Norway, and never grow tired of loving me, if it be only in gratitude.

Vienna, February 17, 1766.

LETTER XXIV.

TO THE SAME.

You complain, in your laſt letter of Feb. 21ſt, of the not having heard from me for a long time; I therefore take it for granted, that my laſt letter was not received. Perhaps it arrived to make my excuſe at the ſame inſtant as I received your complaint. I am infinitely obliged to you, my dear Gemello, for the eagerneſs which you have manifeſted to give me ſome information concerning the fate of my *Serenata*; which, by the laſt news you have ſent me, is become more obſcure, and inexplicable, than ever. But as I am unable to walk in the dark, I ſhall not attempt to grope my way among theſe clouds. And I beg of you not to plague yourſelf any more on the ſubject. Rome has already had ſufficient time to abate its curioſity, and forget all about it; and I have certainly no wiſh to excite new attention

attention to it. I ſhall be very much obliged to you for the copy which you promiſe me.

I ſhare in all the irregularity of your health; you ſhould therefore, according to rule, partake of mine. But I can aſſure you, that this diabolical trade of heroiſm, begins to be very inſupportable to me. Believe me, however, in ſpite of complaints, unceaſingly yours.

Vienna, March 6th, 1766.

LETTER XXV.

TO THE SAME.

At length, returning home a few evenings ago, I found on my table, the pleaſing Epithalamium of our moſt worthy *Count Savioli*. I read it with that eagerneſs which whatever he writes inſpires. I admired the art with which, in ſo maſterly a manner, he has united dignity with clearneſs, nature with elegance, pathos with chearfulneſs; and am convinced that there is no recondite corner of Parnaſſus, with which he is not intimately acquainted. After my reſpectful compliments, pray congratulate him ſincerely, in my name, and ſtimulate him to be faithful to the muſes, by whom he is ſo much favoured.

And

And for yourſelf, my dear Gemello, who with ſuch fraternal zeal, have procured me this pleaſure, receive in return, my moſt affectionate and hearty thanks and ſalutations; not thoſe which are commonly laviſhed among perſons indifferent to each other, but ſuch as a juſt eſteem, and a long ſeaſon of friendſhip inſpire.

Vienna, April 17, 1766.

LETTER XXVI.

TO THE SAME.

I SHOULD appear unjuſt to our tender twinſhip, if I did not communicate to you, (whenever my duty will permit) every little poetical excurſion which I am obliged to take. The genealogy therefore of what I now ſend you, is the following:

In May laſt, one of the moſt exalted divinities of our Olympus, ſtimulated me to write ſome little conſolatory poem, in order to try if it were not poſſible to ſeduce our afflicted Sovereign, from that profound and obſtinate grief in which ſhe has been ſo abſorbed for the loſs of her moſt auguſt Conſort, as to put her own life in danger. Regarding the mere hint as a com-

mand, I went to work immediately: and my labour was ſo fortunate, as not only to procure me a generous and unequivocal teſtimony of beneficent approbation, but inclined my poetical vanity, to enumerate it among the firſt cauſes of the dawnings of ſerenity which began to appear on the countenance of my moſt auguſt Patroneſs, after the peruſal of my ſermon. I know very well, however, that it is no convincing proof to ſay, that *this event has followed the other, and was produced by it.* But among us inhabitants of Parnaſſus, we always conſtrue things *in favorabilibus.* This virtuous princeſs, thinking herſelf too well treated in the poem, and that the partiality of the writer was too viſible, had ſome repugnance to its being printed here. But *Count Canale*, the Sardinian miniſter at this court, having obtained a manuſcript copy, has privately ſent it to Turin, and had it printed there at the royal preſs. Of the few copies ſent hither, merely for the court, foreign miniſters, and ſome particular friends, I have procured this, in order that you may be the firſt to whom it is communicated at Bologna. Receive it with affection, and give it an attentive peruſal: as among other things, you

may

may perhaps find ſomething in it not inapplicable to yourſelf. Adieu, my dear Gemello, take care of your health, and believe me, yours moſt faithfully.

Vienna, Auguſt, 1766.

LETTER XXVII.

TO THE SAME.

AMIDST all the confuſion into which every one is thrown here, particularly myſelf, by the ſmall-pox, which has ſeized the two Empreſſes: that is, the Empreſs (wife of the Emperor Joſeph,) ſeven days ago, and yeſterday the Empreſs-queen, I cannot reſiſt the ſolicitations of our *Abate Cetrulo*, who wiſhes to have a letter to preſent to you, which your friendſhip for him renders unneceſſary. The firſt of the illuſtrious invalids is very ill; but it is ſaid, that the diſorder of the other, is of the mildeſt kind. We are however, under the greateſt anxiety for her ſafety. You will readily believe me, when I tell you, that I have neither leiſure nor ſpirits to lengthen my letter. Adieu, my dear Ge-

mello? Take care of yourſelf, and pity your friend.

Vienna, May 17, 1767.

LETTER XXVIII.

I AM ſenſibly obliged to our poor perſevering pilgrim, who, in ſpite of all his other labours, remembered to deliver my letter to the dear Gemello. This obliging zeal doubles my prayers to Heaven, that he may return, *mens ſana in corpore ſano.*

If I had not received your affectionate and ſincere aſſertions, I ſhould not have doubted for a moment of your ſympathizing with me, in the terrible anxiety which I felt for the imminent danger of my moſt revered Patroneſs: I know your heart, and long-tried tenderneſs. It is impoſſible for me to deſcribe the univerſality of our paſt diſmay and preſent jubilation. I believe there never were ſuch lively, affectionate, indiſputable, and numerous teſtimonies given before, of a people's love for a Sovereign, as have been manifeſted here by all ranks for ours. Her moſt auguſt Son, may ſerve as a model for the

the children of future times. He has watched her night and day, without quitting her a moment, aſſiſting in the adminiſtration of her medicines, and in his care and anxiety for her, totally forgetting himſelf. You may well imagine how much our reſpect and love for a prince of ſuch a character are encreaſed.

We muſt not ſpeak, my dear Gemello, now, of our own complaints; they are too trivial to be mentioned, during this time of univerſal joy. All I can do, is to beg of heaven to grant us, if not patience, at leaſt fortitude ſufficient to combat them. Do you do likewiſe: but forget not, at the ſame time, to remember the affection which I have, and ever ſhall retain for you, to my life's end.

Vienna, July 6th, 1768.

END OF THE SIXTH SECTION.

SECTION VII.

WE ſhall now quit Farinelli for ſome time, in order to attend to other correſpondents. Among theſe, there is no one to whom Metaſtaſio ſeems to write with more affection, than to JOMELLI, the juſtly celebrated muſical compoſer.

LETTER I.

TO SIGNOR NICOLA JOMELLI.

AND does my admirable *Jomelli* then remember me! The confirmation of this truth, of which, in ſpite of your eternal ſilence, I never doubted, has afforded me a pleaſure which I am unable to deſcribe. Indeed I am ſo much the more delighted with your laſt dear letter of the 3d of March, as I have ſo long in vain tried to procure it: having ſent you ſome time ago, my *Alcide al bivio*, by *M. Philip le Rois*; and ſince that, written you a long prattle, which

ought to have been forwarded to you by *Signora Scotti*, at preſent the firſt woman of the opera in England; who, on quitting this court, ſet off for that of London *(a)*. But either my couriers have been to blame, or my diſpatches ineffectual; and yet, I am ſo ſure of your affection, and of my occupying an enviable place in your heart, that whatever may happen, I ſhall never doubt the ſecurity of my ſtation.

I regard the two maſterly airs with which you have kindly favoured me, as precious gifts: and as far as the limits of my muſical knowledge extend, I have admired the new and harmonious texture of the voice and accompaniments, the elegance of the one, and contrivance of the other; and the uncommon unity of the whole, which renders them worthy of your abilities. I muſt confeſs, however, my dear Jomelli, that though this ſtyle impreſſes me with reſpect for the writer,

(*a*) The *Scotti* ſung on our opera ſtage with *Manzoli*, in the ſeaſon of 1764 and 1765. Her voice was feeble, but her ſtyle of ſinging, face, and figure, were captivating. In theſe times the ſerious operas at Vienna, Madrid, and Liſbon, were ſupported by, and wholly under the direction of the Court; and Metaſtaſio imagining this to have been the caſe in our capital, ſays, "that when the Scotti quitted the *Court of Vienna*, ſhe ſet off for that of London."

you have, when you pleaſe, another which inſtantly ſeizes on the heart, without giving the mind the trouble of reflection *(b)*. When I have heard a thouſand times, your airs *Non ſo trovar l'errore*, and *Quando ſará quel dì*, with innumerable others which I cannot now recollect, that are ſtill more ſeducing, they leave me no longer maſter of myſelf, but oblige me in ſpite of myſelf, to feel all that you muſt have felt, in compoſing them. Ah, my dear *Jomelli*, do not abandon a faculty in which you have not, nor ever will have, a rival. In maſterly airs, there may

(b) This was the opinion of the Italians in general, concerning the compoſitions of Jomelli, after his reſidence in Germany; where his rich harmony, and inſtrumental complication, were perhaps always more admired, than his elegant and ſimple melody. Five years after this period, it was the opinion of the Neapolitans, that the ſongs of *Jomelli*, which maſters reſpected for their art, and contrivance, were too elaborate, and gave the hearers too much trouble, to afford them careleſs delight. Poets are always ready to join in cenſuring the compoſers' ſcience, and performer's execution, as equal enemies to the beauties of the poetry, and intereſt of the drama; but, as the Public is a many-headed animal, with ears of all ſorts and ſizes, it is to be feared, that ſome of them will expect learning and ſcience to be diſplayed by the compoſer, and powers of execution by the ſinger, as well as others ſuch artleſs ſimplicity, as would reduce an opera to a level with a ballad farce.

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be compoſers, perhaps, who by dint of pains and labour, will approach you; but in finding the road to the hearts of others, their own muſt be formed of fibres as delicate and ſenſitive as yours, and different from all thoſe who have hitherto dealt in muſical notes. It is true, that in writing in this new ſtyle (*c*) you cannot help ſometimes expreſſing the paſſions in the way which your own happy temperament ſuggeſts; but being obliged, in order to ſupport your learned idea, too frequently to interrupt the voice, the impreſſions already made in the mind of the hearer, are effaced; and for the reputation of a great maſter, you neglect that of an amiable, and moſt powerful muſician.

Adieu, my dear, and moſt worthy friend. If you knew with what occupations I am oppreſſed, you would be better able to judge of that affectionate regard, which ſo long prevents me from finiſhing this letter. Take care of your health, for the honour of the harmonic family. Continue to love me, and believe me to be invariably yours.

Vienna, April 6, 1765.

(*c*) Meaning his ſecond manner, to which he adhered in Germany.

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The correſpondence of the Imperial laureat with Signor SAVERIO MATTEI, upon which we ſhall now enter, will diſcloſe to the reader, his opinion upon the ſubjects of poetry, muſic, criticiſm, and literature in general, during a period of eleven years, better than any other letters in the collection. Almoſt every correſpondence which Metaſtatio carried on with authors, and the learned of his time, ſeems to have been forced upon him, not ſo much perhaps with a view to obtain his ſentiments on literary ſubjects, as his approbation of the works of which they made him a preſent. But whether this was the caſe with Sig. Mattei, an author of great merit ſtill living, we know not; yet we find that the private praiſe which he received from the great Lyric poet, was eagerly made public, in deſpite of earneſt injunctions to the contrary.

The following letter was written in reply to one, which Metaſtaſio had received from Sig. Mattei, informing him that he had ſent him a copy of his tranſlation of the Pſalms into Italian verſe, with diſſertations on Hebrew

brew poetry, and other poetical compoſitions.

LETTER II.

TO SIGNOR D. SAVERIO MATTEI.

I DEFERRED for one poſt, the anſwering your no leſs lively than obliging letter, hoping every moment, that the Book of Pſalms, which you had been ſo kind to ſend me would arrive, that I might tell you what my firſt ſenſations were in peruſing it: but not having yet ſeen it, I ſhall not add to the diſappointment which ſuch a delay has produced in myſelf, that which a longer ſilence would produce in you, to the diſcredit of my gratitude. I therefore haſten to return you infinite and moſt ſincere thanks, both for the gift which you have been pleaſed to beſtow on me, and for the affectionate and partial depoſitions of your kind heart in my favour, expreſſed in proſe and in verſe, with equal grace and elegance. In the printed poetical Eſſay which I always peruſe, and re-peruſe with new pleaſure, you have fully ſhewn with what kind of pindaric pen nature has furniſhed

furniſhed you, and how dextrouſly your application has enabled you to uſe it. I congratulate you on the poſſeſſion of ſuch powers, and wiſh that all thoſe flights which youthful courage and vigour ſhall ſtimulate you to take, may be equally happy. Ah! my dear Sig. *Mattei*, wiſh not to be poſſeſſed of my old and worn-out buſkins. You know not how they gall the preſent wearer, nor what trouble it has coſt me to conceal the uneaſineſs they occaſion. Our good ſire, Apollo, who has already ſo highly favoured you, will furniſh you with a much better ſhoemaker. Continue to honour me with your valuable friendſhip, and believe me to be with equal reſpect and eſteem, &c.

Vienna, Auguſt 8, 1768.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

THREE weeks have already elapſed, ſince I was informed by the officers of this cuſtom-houſe, that a parcel of books addreſſed to me, was arrived. I had no doubt, but that this was the long wiſhed for poetical preſent of books which you had generouſly deſtined for

for my uſe; but my long impatience to poſ-ſeſs them, has ſtill been obliged to ſuffer the further delay of a rigorous examination, to which all printed books brought hither are ſubject; and to this delay was added that of the book-binder, into whoſe hands I was obliged to put the looſe and deranged ſheets, in order to enable me to read them with any degree of comfort. I am at length, however, in poſſeſſion of the three volumes; and here I muſt frankly confeſs, that the magnetic power of the verſes, violently attracted all my attention to the previous peruſal of your poetical verſion. But perceiving in your learned preface, (which from long habit, I never neglect) that it was your wiſh the reader ſhould firſt be furniſhed with your neceſſary *viaticum*, before he entered on poetic ground, I prepared to obey you; and found myſelf well ſatisfied, and generouſly rewarded for my obedience; as your very learned preliminary diſſertation, not only qualified me, (as much as I am capable of being qualified) to judge of the merit of your tranſlation, but has made me travel with wonder and delight, through the vaſt, various, and choice erudition, with which you are no leſs uſefully, than abundantly furniſhed; and has excited

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in me ſuch eagerneſs to profit at ſo eaſy a rate, from all the information which your literary labours preſent to the reader, that I could not defer enriching myſelf, by a peruſal of your golden treatiſe on the calendar, weights, meaſures, and money of the Hebrews. Thus prepared and diſpoſed, you may eaſily imagine, Sir, that in the peruſal of the eighty Pſalms which you have tranſlated, I have not neglected one of the marginal notes, or obſervations with which they are accompanied; and that I have been compelled to receive all the inſtruction, as well as pleaſure, which you have prepared for us.

The dignity, clearneſs, harmony, and elegance of the ſtyle, ſo properly varied, according to the grandeur, humility, anger, contrition, or tenderneſs, expreſſed in the ſacred writings, would be a ſufficient merit in your work; but, the being able to correct ſo effectually and naturally, what ſo many of the moſt learned inveſtigators after long trying in vain to accompliſh, have pronounced heterogeneous to the Oriental language of poetry, has, in my opinion, all the merit of a new diſcovery of ſome unknown continent; and beſides this, I admire in you, without

without underſtanding it, the combination, in one individual, of all that fire and energy of genius, which enables you to mount Parnaſſus, with the cool perſeverance neceſſary to critical enquiries.

And yet, begging your pardon, I have found ſomething that is reprehenſible in your book, the attentive peruſal of which has accuſtomed me to criticiſm. I cannot forgive the injuſtice with which you have treated in your preface, that *poor little town*, as you call your native place; in which you complain of being buried in ſolitude: as you owe to the tranquil leiſure which it affords you, an exemption from the inevitable diſtractions of a crouded city, and are in ſome meaſure indebted to this circumſtance for the honourable place which you already hold in the Republic of letters, at ſo early a period of your life. If you would wipe away this ungrateful ſtain, you ought in conſcience to make a public acknowledgment of your error.

But retorting the accuſation, you will, perhaps, ſay that it is I that am ungrateful, for appearing almoſt inſenſible to the kind partiality with which you ſo liberally honour me in your works, and poſtponing my thanks

thanks for it to the end of my letter. But you muſt not do me ſo much injuſtice. I have a due ſenſe of all your kindneſs, and of the advantage of your good opinion: and if I ſpeak of them late and briefly, it is becauſe I am fearful if I ſhould dwell too much on the ſubject of your praiſe, of provoking you to examine the little merit I may have, by an exact experiment, in your critical crucible. Ah! my dear Sig. Saverio! explore it no further, if you wiſh to continue to love me; but rather judge of it from that grateful, affectionate, and reſpectful eſteem, with which I am, and ever wiſh to be, invariably yours.

Vienna, April 3, 1769.

P. S. I intended ſpeaking fully of the maſterly tranſlations of Pindar and Homer; of the truly lyrical dedication; and of ſome particular pſalms with which I have been, in a more eſpecial manner, affected; but my natural powers correſpond but ill with my wiſhes. Pray believe, however, that I feel all that one author can wiſh another to feel in his favour.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

Tu quoque brute fili mi! And is my friend Sig. D. Saverio among the conſpirators? Or rather among the two partial projectors who have conceived a deſign that will overwhelm me with confuſion? How could you imagine it poſſible for me to have the courage to ſuſtain the idea of ſeeing myſelf placed at the ſide of the father of the muſes? (*d*) And the Princeſs of Belmonte, who ought to be perfectly acquainted with the character of the dean of her ſervants, has *She*, inſtead of oppoſing it, given her countenance and ſupport to ſo ſtrange a deſign, and conſpired to vex and mortify me? The extreme diffidence of myſelf, even to a vice, which has tormented me through the whole courſe of my life, and been the greateſt obſtacle to my proſperity, was ſo well known

(*d*) It ſeems that there was at this time, a deſign formed at Naples, of printing Pope's life of Homer, and dedicating it to Metaſtaſio, and of placing an engraving of his head, oppoſite to that of Homer.

to her, that ſhe might have eaſily figured to herſelf, what melancholy thoughts of my own unworthineſs, ſuch exceſſive partiality would awaken; and how ſenſible I muſt be, of the diſproportion of an honour, which has been ſo involuntarily uſurped by me. You muſt not imagine, however, that my juſt ſhame will in the leaſt diminiſh the gratitude which I owe to my friends, for their kind and moſt flattering intentions. For though it has been carried to exceſs, I ſhould regard it as the happieſt circumſtance of my life, if I could ſeparate the idea of the effect from the cauſe.

It would be too long and laborious a taſk for me, to point out all the paſſages of your learned tranſlation which have particularly ſtruck me. The matter would encreaſe exceſſively under the pen. But I am now no more able to write long letters; and the remorſe for neglected excellence would be more diſagreeable to me, than the fatigue of praiſing it. I muſt, however, briefly tell you, that the forty-fourth and ſixty-ſeventh Pſalms, have impreſſed my mind with an uncommon degree of pleaſure and admiration: the firſt by an ingenious, elegant, and poetical elocution, no leſs wonderfully analo-

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gous to the allegorical, than literal, ſenſe; and the ſecond, by an unexpected clearneſs and conſiſtence, notwithſtanding the apparent deſperate want of connexion in the original. Then in your thoughts on the ancient muſic, and on the theatre, you have flattered my ſelf-love ſufficiently to make me pleaſed with my own ideas; as the greater part of them perfectly coincide with thoſe which my meditations on the ſame ſubjects have formerly produced.

The frank and friendly account which you have confided to me, of your paſt and preſent enterpriſes, has obliged me extremely; and I cannot ſufficiently praiſe your wiſe reſolution of devoting your diſtinguiſhed talents to the more Fruitful, and for you, more Glorious, application of poetry. I foreſee with pleaſure, the intereſting and illuſtrious progreſs you will make; and already, in ſome degree, partake of it, both as your fellow labourer, and almoſt your countryman. You muſt not be ſcandalized at this laſt pretenſion: there is a foundation for it. You already know, that the beneficent Gian Vincenzo Gravina, no leſs a Father than Maſter to me, with a labour which ought to have produced fruit more worthy of him, ſtrove

to enrich my mind with Greek and Latin literature, and Roman juriſprudence. Nor can you be a ſtranger to the merit of his celebrated relation, Gregorio Caropreſe, into whoſe hands he placed me, while a child, to go through a whole courſe of philoſophy under his diſcipline, and with whom I reſided, in Calabria, all the time that was thought neceſſary for the completion of that deſign. I have therefore ſome reaſon to pride myſelf for having run from the banks of my native Tibur, as far as Magna Græcia, and taſting the firſt aliments of ſcientific cognition, near the renowned ſource of the Italic ſect.

My tranſlation in verſe of Horace's Art of Poetry, has been long finiſhed. It however, requires innumerable notes and obſervations, for which I have collected many materials; but time has always been wanting, as well as patience, for a taſk to me extremely ungrateful; ſo that theſe materials ſtill remain in the utmoſt confuſion; nor do I know when I ſhall have courage ſufficient to ſet about digeſting them. The beſt of it is, that the republic of letters will not ſuffer any great injury from my negligence. The few reflections which I wrote upon all the Greek tragedies and comedies that remain, merely

merely to aſſiſt my own memory, had wholly fulfilled their deſtination in the private uſe I made of them. I had not furniſhed them with the neceſſary equipage, for appearing with decency in the learned world; and they muſt therefore remain contented, in the little corner which I have aſſigned them in my bureau.

Alas! I am now out of breath, my much reſpected Sig. Saverio. The pleaſure of talking with You, has made me forget my infirmities; but now I am forced to finiſh my letter, whether I will or no. Do not withdraw from me your regard. Repreſent the exceſs of my mortification and gratitude to the Princeſs di Belmonte—Honour me with your commands, and believe me, &c.

Vienna, May 29, 1769.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

In ſpite of the perſecution of my hypochondriac affections, which at preſent thwart me beyond their uſual indiſcretion, I cannot ſuffer your laſt moſt obliging letter to remain

longer, unanſwered; in which I find new motives for being flattered with that enviable good fortune, much more than my own merit, which has produced your affectionate and moſt partial regard towards me.

I have read over and over again, and always with new pleaſure, both the Epithalamic Pſalm, and the Cantata of *Eunoſto*. In the firſt, beſides the merits it has in common with its companions, I have admired the author's dexterity in applying it ſo opportunely on the preſent occaſion; and in the dedication of it, I am pleaſed with myſelf to find, that before I had ſuch a convincing proof of it, I was always firmly of opinion that you were no leſs familiar with the Latin than the Italian muſe. And in the moſt gay and pleaſing *Eunoſto*, I ſaw throughout, in all its force, your reigning and characteriſtic excellence, in uniting poetical elegance with the deepeſt learning and erudition. I congratulate you on theſe gifts, and myſelf on being enriched with the poſſeſſion of ſo valuable a friend.

I ſhall try my influence with SASSONE (*Haſſe*) to get him to ſet one of your pſalms; though he is ſo frequently diſabled by the gout, that I know not whether he will have

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it in his power to comply with my requeſt. He does not live in the city; ſo that many months elapſe, ſometimes, without our ſeeing each other. As ſoon as ever I can ſpare the time, I ſhall ſeek him, and if poſſible, ſet him to work. I ſhould lengthen this letter conſiderably, if writing was leſs painful and inconvenient to the mechaniſm of my frail frame. Believe me always, with the moſt conſtant and reſpectful eſteem, &c.

Vienna, Auguſt 14, 1769.

Haſſe, it ſeems, was found in a fit of the gout, and unable to oblige Metaſtaſio, at this time, in complying with his requeſt, however he may have wiſhed it, from a long acquaintance and admiration of his character and abilities; the poet, therefore, ſet his pupil, the accompliſhed Signora *Martinetz*, to work, and the following letter gives an account of her ſucceſs.

LETTER VI.

TO SIG. SAVERIO MATTEI.

THE muſic of the pſalm which you wiſhed to have ſet, has been finiſhed ſome weeks; but I have hitherto had no opportunity of tranſmitting it to you. However, I hope to find one ſoon; and in the mean time, to prevent the delay from giving birth to any ſuſpicions injurious to my diligence, I give you this previous information. The pleaſure with which the young female compoſer has ſet about this enterprize, and executed it, inclines me to flatter myſelf that ſhe has not been unſucceſsful. She propoſed to avail herſelf at once of the grace of the modern ſtyle, avoiding its Licentiouſneſs, and the ſolid eccleſiaſtical harmony of the ancient, ſtript of its Gothiciſm. I am not muſician ſufficient to judge whether ſhe has ſucceeded, or no; but I hope, at leaſt, that the frame will not diſgrace the picture. You will be the beſt judge of this yourſelf, who have been long initiated in harmonical myſteries; and this being the caſe, it is unneceſſary to ſuggeſt to you, that this production,

duction, before it is expoſed to the judgment of profane ears, ſhould be rehearſed under the direction of ſome able, diſcreet, and charitable director; that the faults of others, in the execution, may not be aſcribed to the poor compoſer herſelf. Whenever it is on the road, you ſhall have immediate information, and every neceſſary circumſtance explained.

Adieu, my dear Sig. Don Saverio. Do not ceaſe to love me, and to believe me to be, with equal reſpect and eſteem, &c.

Vienna, December 4, 1769.

LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

I OUGHT to make a long reply to your moſt obliging letter of the 27th of November, in which, in the partiality of affectionate friendſhip, and animated by your natural eloquence, you have almoſt perſuaded me, that the weight of years is a deſirable aſſiſtant in mounting Parnaſſus. But to avoid Aſiatic prolixity, I ſhall tell you, with the moſt ſincere brevity, that the intenſe meditation neceſſary for the invention and texture

texture of a dramatic compoſition, after having treated almoſt all the modifications of the human heart, is inevitably become an exceeding hard labour to me; for having already written ſo much, I am every day in more danger of repeating Myſelf; and the being eternally on the watch would chill invention, and clip my wings, in every attempt at elevation. Add to this, that in my moſt confident and vigourous days, I was wanting, even to exceſs, in the requiſite courage and opinion of myſelf, which is neceſſary in great enterpriſes; and now, I am more than ever convinced, that this ſpecies of uſeful temerity, is not to be acquired in old-age. At preſent, indeed, if my good fortune has not freed me from fatigue, it has at leaſt, exempted me from the diſagreeable neceſſity of publiſhing my weakneſs: for when I had nearly accompliſhed the labour, enjoined me, I diſcovered that it was not the intention of the court, to give any theatrical exhibition, at the approaching nuptials; ſo that I have abandoned the work with the higheſt pleaſure, remitting to the Greek calends, the taſk of finiſhing it. But I have already ſpoken too much about myſelf.

I have read with infinite pleaſure, the octave Stanza, enriched with the Latin paraphrate,

paraphraſe, entitled, *La Veglia de' Numi*, and have diſcovered what your genius is capable of, even in This kind of poetry. I know not what more to require of you. Facility, dignity, elegance, imagination, harmony, and above all, judgment. The noble and pleaſing ſimile of the child and the faun, diſcovers the richneſs of the mine, which produced it. I congratulate you upon it, and am much obliged to you for the communication.

To-day, a parcel containing your moſt beautiful Pſalms, ſet to muſic by Mademoiſelle Marianne Martinetz, has been ſent to the poſt, for Naples. I hope the muſical compoſitions will not diſgrace your excellent poetry; and am impatient for your ſincere opinion, as well as that of other good judges. Continue to honour me with your affectionate friendſhip, and believe me, invariably yours.

Vienna, December 18, 1769.

The following long, and curious letter, not only gives an account of the favourable reception at Naples, of the muſic which Signora Martinetz had ſet to one of the Pſalms of Sig. Saverio Matteï's tranſlation; but contains

tains the opinions of Metaſtaſio, on the ſubject of ancient Greek muſic. A theme upon which the poet unwillingly entered; but, having been preſſed by his correſpondent to diſcuſs this dark and difficult point, in hopes, probably, that his own decided ſentiments would be fortified by coincidence, Metaſtaſio humbly diſclaims all ſcience, and neither ſpeaks as a profound critic, nor muſician; but anſwers an unreaſonable queſtion, like an intelligent man, under the guidance of modeſty, and good taſte. It was not likely that Metaſtaſio, who had never heard the ancient muſic, nor ſcientifically ſtudied the modern, ſhould arrogantly attempt to inform one who profeſſed himſelf to be well acquainted with the ancient muſical writers, and a judge of modern compoſition, The poet gets rid of the queſtion dextrouſly: leaving it to be anſwered by men of more courage, and leſs diffidence in their own powers.

LETTER VIII.

TO SIGNOR SAVERIO MATTEI.

A FEW affairs, moſt reſpected Sig. Saverio, are ſufficient to occupy all the activity of a tired

tired and exhauſted individual, loaded with years, like myſelf. I have had more buſineſs on my hands for ſome time paſt, than ſtrength to accompliſh it; ſo that I muſt not only beg of you to pardon, but pity, my involuntary delay, in anſwering your laſt obliging and learned letter. I never diſſembled, from the beginning of our intercourſe, my phyſical impediments to becoming a conſtant and laborious correſpondent; ſo that you are obliged to take me as you found me, and in ſpite of all defects, to regard me as your own.

Prudens emiſti vitioſum: dicta tibi eſt lex.

Our indefatigable young compoſer, is extremely ſurpriſed at the extraordinary approbation with which you have honoured her muſic. The limits preſcribed to her ambition, did not allow her to aſpire at ſuch an elevation; and ſhe has no doubt, but that ſhe is indebted to your courteſy, for the chief part of thoſe ſtrong expreſſions which have been beſtowed upon her production. However, to hear the effect of her attempt, ſhe had had a very private rehearſal in her own apartment, of the Pſalm which ſhe had ſet. There was only a ſingle inſtrument for each part; and four voices, rather below mediocrity, without any other aſſiſtance in the

choruſes: ſo that all the enchantment of that ſpecies of painting, which ariſes from *chiaro-ſcuro*, was wanting. But notwithſtanding this, I am obliged to confeſs, that the varied, delightful, and uncommon harmony of the compoſition, greatly ſurpaſſed my expectation; as well as that of the few initiated, who were admitted to the myſteries. She had the precaution to provide a copy of the poetry for each perſon preſent, and exulted in the general applauſe beſtowed on the excellent Tranſlator. I hope that this neceſſary ſtep was not neglected at Naples. I take an intereſted part in the juſt honour which has been done to your learned book, by the rapid ſale, which has ſo ſoon rendered a new edition, in octavo, neceſſary; but I ſhould be ſorry if the firſt, in quarto, remained incomplete. The three volumes with which you ſo obligingly favoured me, merely put into boards, for the convenience of inſtant peruſal, wait with impatience for their companion or companions, in order to be uniformly dreſſed with that elegance and ſplendour, which is due to their high rank and worth. They have hitherto occupied my leiſure ſo pleaſantly and uſefully, that I ſhould

I ſhould grieve to defraud them of this little mark of my gratitude.

And do you wiſh *me* to tell You my ſentiments of the merit of Ancient Muſic! Ah! cruel Signor Saverio! This is inhumanly driving me into a labyrinth, whence you very well know, that it is impoſſible for me to extricate myſelf, even if I were furniſhed with all the neceſſary inſtruments, for ſuch an operation, and was in the vigour of youth to uſe them. What reaſonable parallel can I poſſibly draw of unknown objects? I am convinced of the royal pomp and magnificence of the Hebrew muſic: I am not allowed to doubt of the efficacy of the Greek; but notwithſtanding that, I am utterly unable to form to myſelf, a juſt idea of their different ſyſtems. I likewiſe know very well, that muſic is the ſame throughout all nature, that is, conſiſting of *a delightful harmony, produced from proportions of grave and acute tones, and in times of different duration.* But who will furniſh me with the clue of Ariadne, to prevent my being bewildered in theſe proportions? They principally depend on the accurate diviſion of the ſcale, or ſeries of tones; which ſcale, however, has been, I believe, and ſtill remains,

mains, manifeſtly imperfect. How ſhould I doubt of this, when I hear the greateſt maſters diſpute whether the interval from one ſound to another, ought to conſiſt of 5, 7, or 9 commas? When I find that one calls the 4th a diſcord, and another a perfect concord? While I perceive that a harpſichord, if tuned exactly according to the diviſions of our ſyſtem, is ſenſibly falſe? And if, in order to remedy this inconvenience, Tuners ought to leave an exceſſive 5th, called the *Wolf*, (that is, out of tune,) and flattens as much as poſſible the other 5ths, to render the 3ds more agreeable? Who will tell me, that the ancients were more happy than we are in the exactneſs of this diviſion, no leſs ſubject to error, than that of the calendar! Or who will inform me, by what expedient they obviated this imperfection, in order to diſguiſe, as we do, the inconvenience?

After having read in Plutarch, the tireſome enumeration of the inventors of muſical improvements; after hearing from him, and the Greek writers collected and commented by the learned Meibomius, the terms *hypate*, *nete*, *diapaſon*, *diateſſaron*, *diapente*, *tetrachords*, *diatonic*, *chromatic*, and *enarmonic genera*, and all the vocabulary of ancient

cient muſic, ſhall I be a bit the wiſer? ſhall I then know how to form a clear definition of all thoſe words which fright children? And in ſuch total darkneſs, how is it poſſible to form compariſons? Perhaps what is dark as Erebus to me, may be broad day-light to others more perſpicacious, and leſs ſtrangers in this vaſt and gloomy province. But you muſt not imagine, that even this will enable them to form a juſt compariſon between the ancient and modern muſic. Muſic is the object of a particular ſenſe; and the ſenſes, either from their natural variations, or thoſe which different habits occaſion, change their taſte, not only every century, but every ſeaſon. A banquet dreſſed at preſent by the receipt of *Apicius*, would diſguſt the ſtrongeſt ſtomachs. The ſo much boaſted *Bacchi cura Falernus agar*, in the opinion of modern palates, would now produce a wine only fit for galley-ſlaves. Bitter, nauſeous Coffee, worſe than poiſon itſelf, according to Redi, is become a moſt delightful beverage, to all the inhabitants of the globe; and who knows, whether, at laſt, he did not grow fond of it himſelf. The Airs which ſo enchanted our forefathers, are now become coarſe, diſguſting, and inſupportable lullabies,

bies, to modern ears. What then ſhall we call the perfection of muſic, ſubjected as it is to the deciſions of taſte, which is itſelf every moment changing? and whence ſhall I take a certain model from which to determine, whether I judge from ſound principles, or the delirium of taſte! But, you ſay, "this "ſcepticiſm does not anſwer my queſtion. "I can doubt as well as you, and have no "great curioſity to know how you doubt. "My wiſh is, to be informed what your "ideas are of ancient and modern muſic; "as it ſeems abſolutely impoſſible, but that "in ſpite of all your doubt, you muſt have "formed ſome." It is moſt certain, my dear friend, that the ſlighteſt foundations are ſufficient for our active and daring imagination to build upon at our pleaſure. The inſtant I hear the names of Cairo, or Pekin, pronounced, they preſent me with ideas of thoſe vaſt cities, which I have never ſeen. Now if it will ſatisfy you, Sir, to know the ideas which I have formed on ſimilar foundations, I am ready to gratify your curioſity.

It ſeems to me, my much reſpected friend, that the muſic of the ancients, was not only much more ſimple than ours, but more efficacious; and that of the moderns, on the

contrary, is more artificial, and more wonderful. When I hear that Plato, in his republic, would have Muſic be the firſt univerſal ſtudy of every individual, as a neceſſary foundation for every other ſtudy, and every virtue: when I read, that not only all the poets but all the philoſophers of Greece, the ſuperintendents of the exerciſe of youth, and magiſtrates of republics themſelves, were excellent muſicians; I conclude, that muſic muſt then have required leſs ſtudy than now; when in order to become a tolerable artiſt, it is neceſſary to beſtow half a life upon it. Hence the ancient muſt, conſequently, have been more ſimple. To prove that ours is more artful than that, it is ſufficient to mention, excluſive of every thing elſe, modern Counterpoint; by means of which, twenty-four or even more melodies, all different from each other, may be heard at the ſame time, and produce ſweet harmony, unknown to the ancients. That this contrivance was unknown to the ancients, is demonſtrated by the learned Padre Martini, who aſſigns hiſtorical and ſcientific reaſons, why they neither had nor could have it; proving, that the union of different voices, mentioned in a few paſſages of ancient authors, upon which a contrary opinion has been weakly ſupported, is all reducible to

the ſinging at the ſame time, ſome in 4ths, ſome in 5ths, and ſome in octaves, but in exactly the ſame melody.

And indeed, if ſuch a wonderful invention had been known to the Greeks, who can believe that they would not have deſcribed it with more pomp and parade? Let us add likewiſe, that all the different ways which the ancients had of writing muſic, that are come down to us, render their practice of our complicated counterpoint impoſſible. That power of expreſſing, as we do at preſent, in one ſingle ſtaff compoſed of five lines, all the alterations of ſounds poſſible, and their ſeveral lengths and duration, it was which enabled us, by placing one melody over another, to diſcover at a ſingle glance, all their relations and iſochronous employments, which, in my opinion, gave birth to counterpoint. Now this manner of writing muſic, you know, is not of higher antiquity, than the eleventh century.

Then the ancient muſic, having had more effect than the modern, is to me a proof that it muſt have been occaſioned by the abſolutely different inſtitution of ancient and modern ſingers. The theatre is the throne

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of muſic. There ſhe can diſplay all the pomp of her enchantments, and there the reigning taſte of the people is propagated. The theatres of the ancients were vaſt ſquares, ours are veſſels of ſmall dimenſions. Hence, in order to be heard in them by the innumerable ſpectators aſſembled together, it was neceſſary to be poſſeſſed of that *vox Tragœdorum*, which Tully required in an orator; and, conſequently, it was neceſſary for perſons deſtined to uſe their voices in ſuch ample theatres, to begin in very early youth, to render it ſtrong, firm, clear, and vigorous, by an exerciſe very different from that in preſent practice. On the contrary, our ſingers, who can be heard with much leſs force, have abandoned the ancient laborious ſchool: and inſtead of fatiguing themſelves in rendering their voices firm, robuſt, and ſonorous, ſtudy to make them more delicate and flexible. By this new method, they have attained the wonderful power of velocity, which aſtoniſhes the hearers, and procures them unbounded applauſe.

But a voice diminiſhed, in eternal motion, and, conſequently, weakened by arpeggios, trills, and diviſions, may well afford that pleaſure which ariſes from wonder, and

ought to be preceded by a ſyllogiſm; but never that proceeding immediately from the natural and vigorous impreſſions of a clear, firm, and robuſt voice, which affects our organs of hearing with equal force and delight, and has the power even to penetrate the ſoul. I have had, and many others may have, an opportunity, by a ſmall ſpecimen, to judge how enormous a difference there is between theſe two manners of ſinging. The ſingers of the pontifical chapel, though from their childhood educated in the modern ſchool, when they are admitted in that choir, are obliged rigorouſly to abandon all the applauded embelliſhments of common ſinging, and to accuſtom themſelves, as much as poſſible, at ſo late a period, to ſwell and ſuſtain the voice. Now the celebrated *Miſerere* itſelf, which has raviſhed me in extatic pleaſure, and internally moved me, as ſung at Rome, beyond any other muſic I ever heard, has only fatigued and wearied me, when executed at Vienna, according to the moſt excellent ſtyle of the preſent times.

I have imagined, ſometimes, that our eccleſiaſtical chant might give us ſome idea of the ancient; conſidering, that about the end of the ſixth or beginning of the ſeventh century,

century, when St. Gregory regulated the music of the Liturgy, the public theatres were open; and it appears to me natural, that whatever music was composed at that time, would be tinctured with the reigning style. But besides the barbarism into which the theatres, as well as other things, were then sunk, what performers could be found now, that are able to execute it, if it is impossible for our fingers to sustain a *maxima* (*e*), though they can run thirty-two semiquavers in a bar?

Good God! what a long and tiresome scrawl have you induced me to write! I may well say with Anacreon's dove:

> Λαλιστέραν μ' ἔθηκας,
> Ἄνθρωπε, καὶ κορώνης.
>
> Thy treatment is so kind and gracious,
> It makes me as the Pie loquacious.

In reward for my blind obedience, I intreat you not to suffer this letter to get into other hands than your own. I shall be inconsolable, if any one should think of making it public, under the notion of doing me honour. You know my defects: pity them: continue to love me in spite of them; and constantly believe me, &c.

Vienna, April 25, 1770.

(*e*) A *Maxima* or *Large*, in old music, equalled in length, eight semibreves.

LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

I RECEIVED laſt week your parcel from Naples. I know not by what conveyance, nor could any one inform me; but I perceive that it brings me the ſheets which ſhould have accompanied your preceding letter.

I have read your ingenious Cantata, for the nuptials of the Marchioneſs of *Tanucci*, or rather Drama; for this pleaſing compoſition, beſides the vivacity of ſtyle, is full of action and incidents, which entertain and ſeduce the reader, and at the ſame time contribute to the panegyric of the hero. Every day produces new proofs of the amazing extenſion of your talents; and I am proud of the juſt idea which I had conceived of them, from the very beginning of our acquaintance.

I am extremely delighted by the attentive peruſal of the muſico-philoſophical letters, which you have been pleaſed to communicate to me (*f*). I have both admired and envied the force and dexterity of two valiant athletics, who not only ſhew maſterſhip in

(*f*) Alluding to a controverſy on the ſubject of ancient Muſic, between Sig. Mattei and the Biſhop of * * *, inſerted in the *Salmi*, Tom. II.

their

their art by aſſailing, but ſkirmiſhing with each other. They have long kept me fluctuating between their different deciſions. Each of them aſſaulting me alone, would have vanquiſhed me; but the one having defended me from the violence of the other, without changing my place, I find myſelf in the midſt of my former doubts. All that I can be certain of, is, my firm reſolution never to expoſe myſelf to the attacks of ſuch expert and vigorous champions, leſt I ſhould furniſh you with too cogent reaſons for diminiſhing that exceſſive partiality with which I perceive you think, ſpeak, and write, of me: a partiality, which being wholly gratuitous, is not ſufficiently repaid by the ample, but due juſtice, which I publicly render you.

My fantaſtical conjectures, concerning ancient muſic, communicated to You only, in mere obedience, are not worthy of a defence. I am myſelf ſo little certain of them, that I would not on any account, take up arms in their ſupport. However, it ſeems to me, as if you thought me inconſiſtent, and in contradiction with my own principles; and I wiſh, at leaſt, to demonſtrate to you, that if I have happened to fail in reaſon and

clearneſs,

clearneſs, I have not violated the dialectic canons. After having aſſerted the enormous *inſtability* of taſte, it is true, I have ſuppoſed a conſtant and general *ſimplicity* in the ancient muſic, compared with ours: and have not ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed the different periods which may be comprehended in the name of ancient. In the firſt place, I confeſs, that it never entered into my mind, that the *variety of taſtes*, at all contradicted the *conſtancy of ſimplicity*; as the one may vary to infinity, without changing the other. For example: the expreſſions of *ſimple and ſoft*, *ſimple and rough*, *ſimple and tender*, *ſimple and ſevere*, &c. involve, in my opinion, no contradiction; as all the thouſand infinitely different modifications, which may be objects of taſte, are capable of one and the ſame conſtant ſimplicity, and may be found included in it, as the ſpecies in the genus. If, therefore, I have not diſtinguiſhed the ſeveral periods of antiquity, it is becauſe I thought ſimplicity common to them all; and the catalogue of taſtes being allowed, it did not ſeem neceſſary to aſcribe to the one, the changes of the other. Let me try to render my reaſoning more clear. I eſtabliſh as a fundamental, that I regard the

theatre,

theatre, to be the indiſputable *arbitrator of the fate of muſic*. In the theatre the people hear, and being naturally imitators, retain, and repeat, what has pleaſed them the moſt, in public, whether there, at feſtivals, or even in the temple, whither in proceſs of time, the theatrical taſte is carried. It is certainly ſo in our times, nor have the ancients been without obſerving it. Ovid, in the third Book of his *Faſti*, deſcribing the different diverſions of the Roman people, in the fields beyond the Tibur, during the *anna Perenna feſtivals*, ſays:

Illic et cantant quidquid dedicere theatris,
Et jactant faciles ad ſua verba manus.

And thither from the ſtage they bring
The fav'rite ſtrains they dance and ſing,
While from the geſtures of their arms
The words obtain new force and charms.

Now the theatre, through all dramatic antiquity, which has come to my knowledge, beginning from the firſt ſtage of Æſchylus, or if you will, the Cart of Theſpis, cotemporary with Solon among the Greeks, and from *Livius Andronicus* among the Romans, the theatre I ſay, has been always a place in the open air, ſufficiently ſpacious to contain a great

a great number of ſpectators, till the modern invention of our incloſed, covered, and extremely contracted halls, which we now honour with the name of theatres. Theſe, in my opinion, have given birth to, favoured, and rendered poſſible, our moſt complicated ſyſtem of muſic, ſo different from the ancient. Now as the art of ſound, depends on the regulation of air put into motion, it is neceſſary, when a great body is to be moved, that it ſhould be done by means infinitely different from thoſe employed for one that is circumſcribed. Whoever ſings in the open air to a whole people, is obliged to uſe his utmoſt force to make himſelf heard; a force unneceſſary for our wonderful diviſions and vocal tricks, which can only be exeeuted with a ſubdued voice, and in an incloſed place. Now when a melody is compoſed of few parts, its combinations are few; ſo that it muſt neceſſarily be more ſimple. What I imagined to be a proof of this univerſal ſimplicity in the time of Plato, is not confuted, to my thinking, by adverting to the pleaſures received from this art in modern times. You muſt not, my dear Sir, imagine theſe to be many, becauſe many talk of them. A ſmall ſmattering in the

the theory of an art, furniſhes the means of much diſcourſe on the ſubject; but the becoming a real artiſt, is the work of inceſſant practice, that maſters every thing, without excepting even virtue itſelf, which ſages have defined *habitus animi ratione conſentaneus.* That the practice of modern muſic is infinite, needs no proof. To exerciſe the cheſt, the lips, the eyes, ears, and fingers, till they inſtantly unite in the performance of offices ſo diſtinct, at the moment of need, requires millions of repetitions, and an abundant ſhare of heroic patience. This painful and eternal exerciſe generally occupies ſo large a portion of our ſhort lives, that it leaves us little for other purpoſes, military or civil. And if a few individuals have been able to vanquiſh theſe enormous difficulties, they ſhould be reckoned among portents and phenomena, which are worthy of admiration, though not foundations for rules.

You ſee, my dear Sir, how loquacious the puerile fear of paſſing for a bad logician in your opinion has rendered me. But to ſay the truth, this was hardly a ſufficient reaſon for giving myſelf ſo much trouble. If we meet with ſoleciſms among legiſlators, it ſhould

ſhould not be regarded as a crime of great ſhame or moral turpitude, if a poet chance to be found guilty of contradictions.

Our diligent young compoſer, eagerly enjoins me to preſent you her beſt reſpects. She has relinquiſhed all her other ſtudies, in order to attempt another pſalm, and has nearly arrived at the middle of the enterprize. If ſhe proceeds with the ſame felicity to the end of her taſk, as ſhe ſeems hitherto to have done, I hope ſhe will not be ſtript of the reputation with which ſhe has already been honoured. The ſecond peruſal of your forty-firſt pſalm, firſt aſſigned to her, fixed her affection in ſuch a manner, that ſhe cannot avail herſelf of the liberty which you have allowed her, of chooſing another. With reſpect to the voices, ſhe has determined to employ the ſame number as ſhe did in the *Miſerere*, for the convenience of exerciſing her abilities as a contrapuntiſt, and for diverſifying the compoſition. She will write two airs with an accompaniment for the harp, *obligata*, but in ſuch a manner, that they may be executed with a violin, when no harp is at hand. Adieu, my dear friend.

Vienna, July 9, 1770.

LET-

LETTER X.

TO THE SAME.

FROM a very commendable deſire of not multiplying uſeleſs letters, I have, perhaps, a little indulged my organic indolence, in deferring my anſwer to your two laſt obliging letters, till the preſent occaſion of annoucing to you the departure of Signora *Martinetz*'s new pſalm; which you would have received at leaſt three weeks ſooner, if a delay had not been occaſioned by the ſcarcity and badneſs of the copyiſts in this city. The pſalm, therefore, already conſigned to the bearer, will go the ſame road as its elder brother. The attentive compoſer has ſtudied as much as poſſible to ſecond the genius of this ſacred production, by a different expreſſion from that of the *Miſerere*. The ſubject of which being the deep affliction of an humble and contrite heart, who knows, acknowledges, and deteſts his crime, and implores mercy and forgiveneſs. The ſubject of the ſecond, is a ſtrong deſire, floating between hope and fear; ſo that conſtant affliction is

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the characteriſtic of the one, and of the other, the perpetual conflict of melancholy and chearful ideas; which in minds occupied by hope and fear, rapidly ſucceed each other. The one furniſhes to the compoſer more paſſion, and the other opens a field of greater variety to the operations of fancy. You muſt judge, Sir, whether ſhe has made a good uſe of the liberty which this pſalm preſents to her imagination.

But however ſhe may have ſucceeded in this, ſhe will certainly never attempt a competition with the compoſer who intends to ornament my fortunate *Giuſeppe riconoſciuto* with his notes. To give me an idea of the excellence of this muſic, beſides what you ſay of it, who have had the advantage to hear it, the reſpected name of the Marquis *di San Giorgio*, who has compoſed it, is ſufficient. I have long known, that he poſſeſſes this enchanting faculty equally with his other numerous accompliſhments; ſo that he is diſtinct from perſons of his claſs, and has left far behind him all the profeſſional induſtry of the moſt celebrated maſters, who confeſs themſelves fortunate that his high rank has delivered them from the danger of contending with ſo powerful a rival. I feel

all

all the efficacy of your ſeducing notes, in the deſire which you expreſs to enrich with your learned obſervations, my ſacred compoſitions: a temptation, to confeſs the truth, too violent for my vanity to bear. But heaven forbid that I ſhould take ſuch an advantage of the kindneſs of ſo worthy and dear a friend! I ought to wiſh, and do truly wiſh, that the conſtant fertility of the ſoil, the cultivation of which you have prudently undertaken, ſhould not be a moment neglected for other concerns. But I am, nevertheleſs, infinitely obliged to you for ſuch a kind intention, which diſcovers to me the generoſity of your heart, and the enviable place in it which I have the good fortune to occupy.

Your elegant encomiums on the wiſe and learned miniſter, the Marquis Tanucci, and thoſe which he univerſally receives from others, are juſtly due. Thoſe in your poem are eaſy, decorous, ingenious, and full of all that pleaſant urbanity, which inſpires hilarity, without the aſſiſtance of a ſingle trait of indelicacy. It is incredible to me, that you ſhould be a novice in this kind of writing. Your attempts may ſerve for models. I am ſo convinced that nothing

is impoſſible to you, that if you ſhould take it into your head to fly, I ſhould not deſpair to ſee you make me an unexpected viſit at my chamber window. The extenſion of the talents with which nature has enriched you, appears to me every day more wonderful; and as I love as much as I admire you, I wiſh that fortune, in favouring you, would be as bountiful as nature.

Adieu, moſt amiable Sig. Saverio; continue to me your moſt precious friendſhip, and remember, that knowing you as I do, I neither can nor will be otherwiſe than yours moſt ſincerely.

Vienna, Sep. 17, 1770.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE received, repeatedly read, and admired with new pleaſure, your new cantata written for the court, which you have been ſo obliging as to ſend me: and believe it impoſſible, in an involuntary poetical operation, that any one ſhould, in future, be equally happy in the uſe of ſymbols ſo obſcure and unconnected, as thoſe inexplicable ancient pictures

tures of Herculaneum, which you have had the art to make the baſis of your ingenious compoſition. I ſpeak not of the noble and clear ſtyle, the ſelection of thoughts, the beauty and harmony of the numbers, the Homerian imitation of Alcides extricating himſelf from Cimmeria, or of the gay and feſtive images in which it abounds. I ſhall only ſay, that I am wholly unable to comprehend how, amidſt the aſſiduity of paternal cares, the laborious agitations of the bar, and the indefatigable toil of critical reſearches, you can ſtill have the force to mount to the ſummit of Parnaſſus at your pleaſure. I congratulate myſelf upon it, as well as our *Magna Græcia*, the enviable productreſs of men of ſuch vigourous and univerſal genius.

The young compoſer rejoices at her muſic being ſafely arrived, and in your poſſeſſion. It is not thought worthy of any ſuch enlightened praiſe as you mention. All her ambition amounted to no more than a wiſh, that her humble notes might afford the excellent author, a part of that pleaſure which ſhe has received in ſetting ſo tender, devout, and ſublime a compoſition: ſhe is therefore impatient for the event.

With my conjectures concerning the muſic of the ancients, do what you pleaſe. They were made in pure obedience to your commands, and after having obtained my wiſhed *reſtitution in integrum* of my poor dialect, I have nothing more to do with them.

Vienna, December, 20, 1770.

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